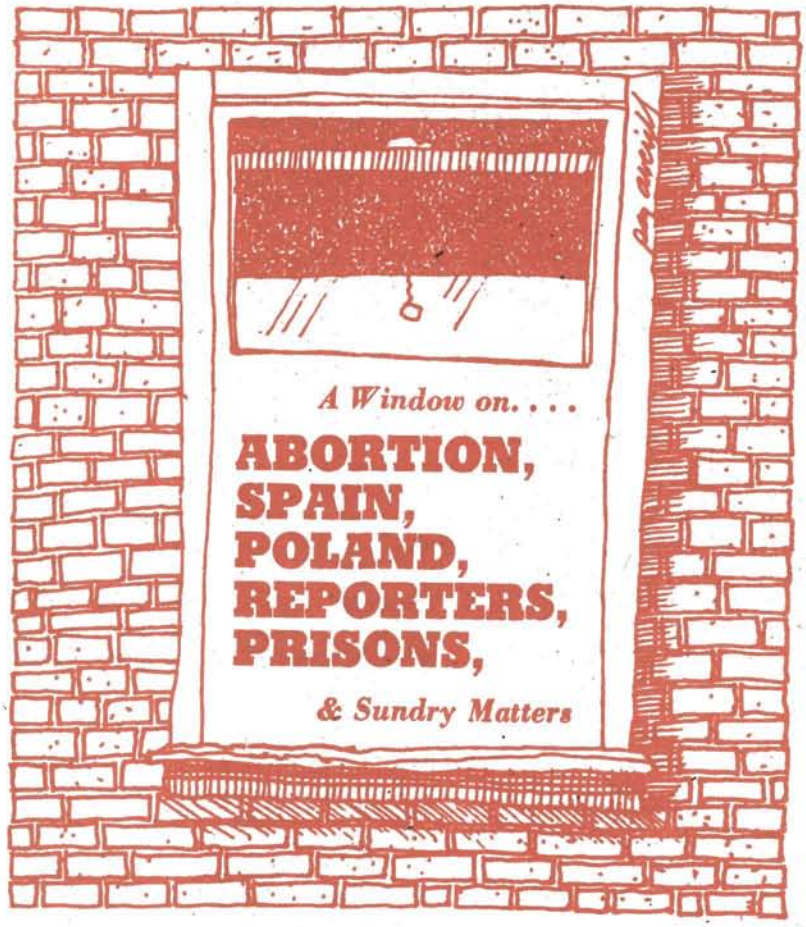
Vol. CIV No. 15 July 22, 1977 75 cents

commonweal



FRANK GETLEIN
TOM HENEGHAN
PETER STEINFELS
ROBERT J. HENLE
KENNETH E. MOORE
ROBERT JOE STOUT
COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.
THOMAS POWERS
GEORGE ABBOTT WHITE
JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN
STEVEN KROLL
KEVIN G. O'CONNELL
JAMES F. McCUE
RAYMOND A. SCHROTH
RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS
JOHI

AG-24003 12-75 12-76 12-7
St. Charles Sem. Libr.
Carthagena Sta.
Celina, Oh. 45822

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEWS & VIEWS

Married Priests

Some different pressure towards a married clergy in the Western Catholic Church has come with the ordination in Montreal of Father Romanus Russo, a former Latin Rite Catholic and Jesuit scholastic, to the Melkite priesthood. Russo, married and the father of two sons, was ordained by Patriarch Maximos V Hakim, leader of the world's one million Melkites.

Russo's ordination followed that in the Middle East of two married Melkites to serve in the U.S.: Fathers Philip Khairallah of Cleveland and Robert Kirby of Notre Dame.

Rome, acting to head off what it regards as a threat to the celibate tradition in the Western Church, has branded the Russo ordination illicit (though valid) and called Maximos V to Rome to explain.

Eastern Rites, such as the Melkite, have a tradition of married clergy. On the books, however, is a Vatican 100-year-old ban against the practice or application of that tradition by the ordination of married men outside the original patriarchal territories.

The Melkite Rite Eparchy (diocese) of Newton, Mass., to whose priesthood Russo was ordained, indirectly challenges this ban in defending the Russo ordination:

"The Second Vatican Council states in its decree on the Eastern Church, 'all Eastern Rite members should know and be convinced that they can and should preserve their liturgical rites and their established way of life. If they have improperly fallen away from them because of circumstance of time or personage, let them take pains to return to their ancestral ways.'. . .

"The ordination of Father Romanus Russo, a married man and the father of two children, by Patriarch Maximos V Hakim is of this order. Vatican II recognizes in the Patriarch the guardian of tradition and discipline and the 'Head of the Rite' everywhere. By ordaining a married man he has only interpreted this tradition proper to the Eastern Churches which dates from Apostolic times. Vatican II sanctioned by conciliar declaration the equality of rites and disciplines in the two Churches of East and West."

This is rather well put, but whether it will put an end to Vatican selectivity, by which it invokes old rules or Council, depending upon which is the more convenient, is another question.

The Lonely Fight

The recent appearance in Rome of dissident French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre boggled the minds of Vaticanologists and stirred speculation that formal excommunication was now just around the piazza. For certainly the lion would refuse to be bearded in his own den.

And if the Pope didn't react to that, certainly he would to the unauthorized ordination of 14 priests and 16 subdeacons at Lefebvre's seminary in Econe, Switzerland.

Or would he?

Believe Father Gommar DePauw, the Trent-oriented dissident now located on Long Island, and there will be no excommunication of Lefebvre. According to him and his "usually reliable sources in Rome," a secret agreement has been struck. To wit:

"The Archbishop and his priests will remain suspended, forbidden to perform any priestly or episcopal functions, as long as their violation of Canon Law regarding seminaries and ordinations continues, and the Archbishop refuses to account to the Vatican for his Swiss and American bank accounts and other material possessions of the Society of St. Pius V.

"Lefebvrists will, however, not be formally excommunicated as schismatics, but, instead, be treated as 'not in full communion with the Church,' in return for the Archbishop's promise never to consecrate another 'traditionalist' bishop." *Another*?

That's correct. Lots of reports traveling about that Lefebvre has elevated at least one of his priests to the episcopacy, possibly as a successor to himself. If the reports prove true, that action of itself could formalize a schism, for it could mean that Lefebvre's dissent is not likely to die with him.

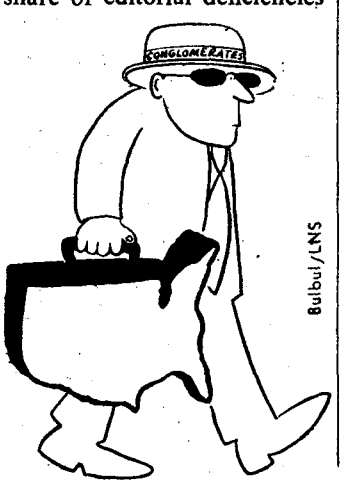
No small wonder that Rome should hang back on excommunication and seek an accommodation.

The Protestant Press

Going, going, gone by the end of the year will be *engage/social action*, the merged journal of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society. The decision was based on the failure of a campaign to raise circulation substantially above the 6,000 level.

The phasing out of *e/sa* is the latest in a series of demises of United Methodist publications. Passed away are *Together*, *Christian Advocate* and their successor, *United Methodists Today*.

In an editorial in the July issue, *e/sa* associate editor Lee Ranck allowed "our share of editorial deficiencies and lack of creativity." But, he added, the demise of *e/sa* "also reflects the lack of a sizeable constituency of United Methodists deeply concerned about involvement in the critical issues involving our world and its peoples."



Ranck termed *e/sa's* circulation of 6,000 "ridiculously low" in a denomination of almost 10 million members with some 3,000 churches, "each of which (theoretically) has a person or persons working in social concerns."

Odds and Ends

— When the National Coalition to Ban Handguns, with the help of more than 1200 church congregations, sponsored a three-day campaign for the voluntary surrender of handguns, 72 weapons were turned in: 65 in Chicago, five in Atlanta, two in San Francisco, none in New York. They may as well have been asking people to turn in their bank books.

— What's the latest standing in the Nuclear Overkill League? The U.S. is still way out front, with sufficient strategic weapons to knock out every Soviet city with a population of over 100,000 about 50 times over. The Soviet Union can knock out every equivalent American city only 20 times. *Only?*

— Westminster has been holding the line in the old Commonwealth against the ordination of women to the Anglican priesthood. But the solid front will be broken in 1979, when one Anglican church goes the way of its American cousin. Which one? Hold your biretta, it's Ireland. Archbishop George O. Simms of Armagh, Primate of the Church of Ireland, said 1979 allowed sufficient time for the theological and pastoral training of women candidates. The Church of England, meanwhile, announced that it would test opinion on the issue at the Church's General Synod in November, 1978. Rome, the while, stands pat. JOHN DEEDY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

Facts or Fancies?

New Brunswick, N.J.

To the Editors: The unabashedly simplistic report by Thomas Powers on the continuing investigation into the murder of President Kennedy is a disgrace to a publication like *Commonweal* [May 27]. Powers's piece belongs rather in the likes of *Reader's Digest* or the *National Star*, publications that assume their readers have suspended their critical intelligence and prefer escapes from complex and difficult realities. Commentary that assumes the posture of critique, but indulges itself with only the facile turn of a phrase, examines nothing. Powers continues the seemingly unending apologia for the Warren Commission's "Lone Assassin" theory that Gerald Ford helped fashion over a decade ago.

Comments such as "Faced with discrepancies I tend to shrug" or "I do not know of any facts which the Oswald Alone theory does not explain" should invite an editor's red pencil. Powers's concern with "stories about awful possibilities" is that they be put to rest, not that the truth may be found. The fear that this nation may have gone the way of a "banana republic" in 1963 with the assassination of President Kennedy, and later with the murder of his brother, is frightening—but it must be faced.

I wish that the publication of this article had not come at a time which for me precludes a substantive response. But exam season at law school leaves but a finite amount of time for study. However, I hope *Commonweal* will provide for its readers future articles that bear less resemblance to press releases issued by the intelligence agencies that have been, in the very least, accessories after the fact in the assassinations of political leaders in the United States. The killing of Orlando Letelier was not the first time planned violent death heightened the stakes of

(*Continued on page 478*)

NEWS & VIEWS: 450 **CORRESPONDENCE: 451**
EDITORIAL: 451
WASHINGTON REPORT: Not Remarkably Entertaining: *Frank Getlein* **452**
MORE GOVERNMENT PRESSURE: *Tom Heneghan* **454**
THE POLITICS OF ABORTION: *Peter Steinfels* **456**
THE 'DEMYSTIFICATION' OF LIFE: *Robert J. Henle* **457**
THE REIGN IN SPAIN: *Kenneth E. Moore* **460**
'ONE OF THE LUCKIER ONES': *Robert Joe Stout* **463**
THE PRESS: The Memory Thereof: *Thomas Powers* **465**
THE SCREEN: *Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.* **467**
VERSE: *Mary Oliver* **455**
A LIFE PAID UP: *George Abbott White* **468**
BOOKS: *Jean Bethke Elshtain, Steven Kroll, Kevin G. O'Connell, James F. McCue, Raymond A. Schroth, Richard John Neuhaus* **470**
DEATH AND THERAPY: *John Garvey* **471**

JAMES O'GARA: *Editor* JOHN DEEDY: *Managing Editor*
RAYMOND A. SCHROTH: *Associate Editor* ANNE M. ROBERTSON, *Editorial Assistant*
COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.: *Movies* JOHN FANDEL: *Poetry*
FRANK GETLEIN: *Washington*
BRIAN WICKER: *Great Britain* ALAIN WOODROW: *Paris*
HENRY TEN KORTENAAR: *Rome* DESMOND FISHER: *Dublin*
EDWARD S. SKILLIN: *Publisher*
Staff: LINDA F. KAYLER, PAMELA J. FITZGERALD, HARRIETTE BALSKY

COMMONWEAL
232 MADISON AVE., NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016
Telephone: (212) MU 3-2042

A review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts. Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. Printed in the USA and published bi-weekly by Commonweal Publishing Co. *Copyright © 1977 Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc.**—US and Canada: $17 a year. Foreign $19. Single copy 75c. Special two-year rate $29.50. Foreign $33.50.*

Commonweal is indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Catholic Periodical Index, and Book Review Digest. Microfilms from Vol. 1, 1924, to date available through University Microfilms; 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. National Serials Data Program No.: ISSN 0010-3330.

THE NEW ABORTION DEBATE

The recent decision by the United States Supreme Court that neither the U.S. Constitution nor federal Medicaid legislation requires the states to pay for abortions—coupled with the moves within both the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the Congress to cut off federal funds for abortions except in cases of "medical necessity"—both simplifies and complicates, for pro- and anti-abortionists like, the future of the abortion debate.

It simplifies it in that we now know that the future debate will not take place in the courts. It complicates the issue by ushering in what might well be transformed into a period of constructive chaos. The Congress and state legislatures—in dialogue with philosophers and theologians, the medical profession, the media and the intellectual community—the "people" must frame laws that only partially answer unanswered questions: when human life begins; whether fetal life has more value in one growth stage than another; how far the state should go to promote childbirth—what other economic and individual values will be sacrificed and who will do the sacrificing; when does "medical necessity" shade into personal convenience.

The 1973 *Roe vs. Wade* decision which, on the basis of privacy, upheld the woman's right to choose abortion, virtually without restriction during the first six months of pregnancy, left open the possibility that the moderate elements on both sides of the controversy might, through dialogue, evolve some kind of compromise social policy: one that would both respect the fact that a large majority of Americans accept abortion in at least some circumstances and also confront the other fact that, in some way, every abortion—whether by the rich suburban socialite who doesn't want to be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

inconvenienced by childbirth or by the welfare mother who fears she cannot feed another child—is a tragedy. This did not happen. Rather, one of the most complicated moral issues of our time, built around the tension between private moral judgment and public good, was reduced to a fruitless election-year fight over an anti-abortion amendment to the Constitution.

Now there is an opportunity to work through the chaos toward a national family policy that would embody the values of both religious and secular humanism. At this point, the Carter-Califano policy to not subsidize abortion-on-demand and the Senate bill to restrict federal funds for abortion to cases when the mother's life is in danger, cases of rape or incest and other specific cases of medical necessity do several things. They allow for the moral ambiguities in the issue—they acknowledge that there may be individual instances in which it is better to tolerate the evil that results than to require the childbirth; they admit that the state has some responsibility to protect the unborn; and they put the brakes on the rush to abortion as if it were a morally indifferent alternative to birth control.

We can't escape the fact that this policy may inflict immediate hardship on the poor. But Justice Blackmun's claim that as a result of the majority decision "the cancer of poverty will continue to grow" misses the point. Abortion doesn't cure poverty. It kills the unborn children of the poor. The far deeper scandal is the disgusting inequitable distribution of wealth and public services in our society, where the poor are terrified to bring children into the world for fear that they cannot feed and clothe them, send them to school, watch them grow and prosper, marry happily, and have children and grandchildren of their own. Abortion can easily be a rich person's solution to a poor family's problem—one that spares the upper classes the burden of facing the social unrest generated by a multiplying poor, black populace.

The Church has a chance to make a more sophisticated, constructive and more radical response to this new situation. It should not automatically oppose a candidate who wants to use state or city funds for abortions when his other social policies might make abortions less desirable. Rather than badger candidates over an anti-abortion Constitutional amendment, which we still do not think adequately resolves the problem in a pluralistic society, Catholic leaders might think harder about positive alternatives. They can begin by lobbying for: an enormous public and private investment, accepting the taxes involved, in health care programs to take care of all childbirth expenses; a family allowance for food, clothing and education; a guaranteed job (Wasn't that in the Democratic platform?); subsidized housing and more generous welfare payments for extended families where grandparents and aunts etc., live together and care for otherwise unwanted children. The just-announced Carter-Califano plan to subsidize the adoption of these children is excellent.

Since the Church has given this moral issue so high a priority, until the government has assumed its full responsibility the Church should back up its preaching by shifting its own resources, limited as they may be, away from education and property and into grants for sex education, family planning and family support.

WASHINGTON REPORT

NOT REMARKABLY ENTERTAINING

From those Hollywood anti-Franco parties during the Spanish Civil War all the way to Jane Fonda during the American War Against the Indochinese and Paul Newman on practically anything, conservatives and reactionaries in this country have grumpily denounced artists and entertainers who have political convictions and express them. Get back on the high wire and get those plates in the air, the right-wing-flap, so to speak, has seemed to be saying, and leave politics to those of us who understand the value of a whiff of grapeshot. Personally, I have always ascribed the right-wing grumps to sheer jealousy over the fact that if you educate yourself to corner the market in soybeans or make a fortune on cost overruns in arms sales, you probably aren't very graceful on the dance floor nor as good-looking as Paul Newman. Besides, it seems incontestable that in one picture Picasso made a more penetrating analysis of Franco than about five generations of top State, Defense and White House officials ever quite managed or have managed yet.

The reason for Picasso's success and the total failure of a distinguished line of official brains from Dean Acheson's through and apparently beyond Henry Kissinger's is instructive: the official brains were concerned with what might be: if Soviet Communism swept through Europe, Spain would be a logical marshaling yard and jumping-off-point for the New World: hence, whatever peccadillos the Spanish dictator may have had on his record, he was obviously a friend of freedom, a bastion of the Free World, rally to him, give him arms, arms, arms, if he uses some of them to electrify the testicles of potential advocates of democracy, that's too bad

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but a small price to pay for saving the whole Free World. Picasso, on the other hand, being an artist, looked not at what might be but at what was and said bluntly that Franco was a monster. That single example came close to convincing me that what we needed was not to get those artists back up on the high wire, but down into State, Defense and the White House: it can't be all that dangerous to have someone in those establishments who sees what is actually happening rather than what might conceivably happen someday, somehow, somewhere, over the rainbow.

Well, I drifted along in that conviction until only the other day, when television personality Henry Kissinger came out from in front of the camera to speak his mind on current international politics to an audience of businessmen and scholars at the Woodrow Wilson International Center. When he finished, I found myself asking the question I had so long despised: What business has this public entertainer using his undoubted show biz charisma to lend specious weight to entirely specious arguments, to clouded understanding, to the general cause of arms racing, political assassinations, the grinding the faces of the poor? Get back on that high wire, Henry, I found myself yelling, and get those NBC plates in the air: Perhaps you can hype that poor third network's ratings. Perhaps not. But you certainly won't if you don't try and instead waste your time on such probably low-gross gigs as the Woodie Wilson Cen.

Like so many Pop celebs who mouth off on politics and the world situation, poor old Kissinger didn't know what the hell he was talking about, got some facts wrong, ignored others and in general sketched a picture of reality as he wished it were; in short, he might as well have been in State, Defense or the White House for all the good his status as an entertainer did for his perception.

The subject was the dread threat of "Eurocommunism," by which the Pop star means not just Western European Communist parties taking over the bankrupt governments of Italy, France and Spain—what a time for Franco to go to that great Inquisition in the Sky, just when we need him most to defend Freedom here below—but even such parties gaining cabinet seats in coalition governments and their mutually profitable alliances with other parties soft on social welfare, dubious about American arms imports as salvation. Kissinger said that the big danger of Eurocommunism is that "the moral and political basis for our present troop deployment in Europe" would be undermined if there were Communist governments in NATO. That seems reasonable, but it also seems to say that the principal purpose of our policy toward Europe is to have a troop deployment on that continent. This may well be the case, but it is a situation open to serious question, not a condition given by a right-wing God to be upheld at whatever cost.

The entertainer also brought his giant brain to bear on the question of how come those hated Commies are getting so strong in Western Europe after all we've done for that difficult continent. Part of his analysis is worth quoting for the prose alone: "In the end, the Communist parties find their opportunities less in their inherent strength than in the demoralization, division, or disorganization of their opponents; they succeed only when the democratic system seems unable to solve the social problems of the day, when the center does not hold and societies become polarized." The general sentiment is classical Marxist doctrine, though the classical Marxists extend the concept of "opponents" to include absolute monarchies and military dictatorships as well as "the democratic system" and come to think of it Kissinger may well use a similar extension to include such forms as within the democratic system. The significance of the quote, however, is stylistic: here is a mind capable of invoking Yeats's twilight gloom (with an inexplicable tense change) in the penultimate clause and falling immediately into standard sociospeak jargon in the next. The juxtaposition tells us clearly what kind of entertainer the entertainer is: a male Barbra Streisand, commanding the top dollar for reasons never apparent in performance.

Continuing his keen analysis, Kissinger gave other reasons for Communist growth: "A relativist age debunks authority and puts nothing in its place as an organizing principle of society." Who is this "age" that debunks "authority"? Like most sociospeak, this example goes soft and drippy as soon as you pick it up. If the age is relativist—who are these relatives?—should not its organizing principle be so, too? Can it be anything else? Would not Brezhnev say the same thing about troublemakers in Eastern Europe? Hasn't he, in fact? Thanks to our common knowledge of the entertainer's own background, we are able to understand his meaning. What he means is that the treasonous American press and Congress rejected their President, Kissinger's own Richard Nixon. But that rejection did not take place because this is a relativist age. It took place because Nixon was perceived to be the crook he was. It was not the "age" that "debunked" the "authority" of Nixon, but Nixon himself by his own handling of that authority. Here Kissinger achieves the analytic powers of a William Safire. Soon he sinks to the final degradation of sounding like the unspeakable Al Haig: Another cause of Communist ascendancy in Europe: "Intellectuals condemn society for materialism when it is prosperous and for injustice when it fails to ensure prosperity."

The implications of that criticism—which, incidentally, takes the speaker himself out of the class of condemned and condemning persons—are exactly those of Haig's famous expostulation against law enforcement officers trying to enforce the law: "Your commander-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in-chief has given you an order." For Haig there was no law higher than the wishes of his master; for Kissinger there is no intellectual activity of more value than joining in the hallelujah chorus in praise of authority, preferably his own.

It's all nonsense, of course. It's breaking the mirror because you don't like what you see in it. Communism is indeed gaining strength in southern Europe and is doing so because of the weaknesses of the existing regimes. Those weaknesses come in part from American militaristic dabbling in European economies. The Germans, militarists themselves, have been able to contain our largesse of arms. The Italians, profoundly anti-militarist, have been ruined by it.

FRANK GETLEIN

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

IN POLAND

MORE GOVERNMENT PRESSURE

Libella is a small Warsaw company which produces floor waxes, cleaning fluids and cosmetics. Because of a political dispute last year, a minority of its shareholders went to court to wrest control of the company from the majority. The minority won. Under normal circumstances, the internal problems of a Polish chemical firm would hardly attract attention. But, because the shareholders represent competing Catholic laymen's groups, the dispute is anything but internal. It is, in fact, the latest in a series of government measures designed to split the laymen's movement and eventually undermine some of the Catholic influence still strong in Poland's communist society.

Libella shares are important for the financial support they provide Warsaw's lay groups. Until recently, seven of the thirteen shares were controlled by the Warsaw Club of Catholic Intelligentsia (KIK), one of five such social and cultural centers around the country. *Wiez*, an ecumenical monthly magazine, was financed by the profits from its three shares, while the remaining three shares supported the Center for Documentation and Social Studies (ODiSS), a research organization which also publishes its own monthly. Although they represent a more liberal and intellectual Catholicism than that of the Polish episcopate, the KIK and *Wiez* groups essentially agree with the Church's critical stand vis-à-vis the Warsaw government. ODiSS, however, has become increasingly closer to the party line on several recent political issues. By shifting the Libella funds to the ODiSS group, the government evidently hopes to deepen the developing split within the Catholic intelligentsia.

This split first became evident during the constitutional controversy early last year. Party leader Edward Gierek suggested that the Constitution be amended to codify the leading role of the party, proclaim Poland's ties to the Soviet Union "unbreakable," and make a citizen's rights dependent on the fulfillment of his duties. Intellectuals and churchmen immediately responded with letters of protest, arguing that the amendments would legalize Soviet influence over Poland and provide a legal basis for discrimination against believers.

Because of the protests, the amendments were watered down, but there was still a dispute within Znak—the group of five Catholic deputies in the Polish parliament—about support for the new clauses. An ODiSS supporter, Konstanty Lubienski, argued for Catholic support of the amendments, while the Znak leader Stanislaw Stomma opposed them. In the final voting on the changes, Stomma's abstention was the only dissenting voice. Parliamentary elections were held soon afterward, and Stomma was prevented from running. Lubienski, with obvious government approval, succeeded him as Znak parliamentary leader.

Several struggles within the laymen's movement ensued. The traditionalist Znak leaders around Stomma and the pro-episcopate weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* argued that Lubienski and his supporters had no right to present themselves as the real Znak circle, and demanded they change their name. At its annual meeting in May, the Warsaw KIK removed all ODiSS representatives from its board of directors while keeping *Wiez* people in prominent positions. For its part, the ODiSS group was able to set up rival laymen's organizations in Warsaw and Lublin and assume control of the KIK chapter in Poznan. The KIK Coordination Bureau, which acted as the liaison between the five KIK chapters across Poland, was closed by government order last June. This made it even more difficult for the independent laymen's groups to keep contact with each other.

At the same time as these rivalries were unfolding, Polish workers struck in protest against the government's dramatic price-increase proposals. Hundreds of protestors lost their jobs and many of them were brought to trial for their participation in the strikes. Among the intellectuals who provided legal and financial support for the jailed workers and their families were a number of KIK members. Although there were no formal bonds between the laymen's organizations and groups such as the Committee for the Defense of the Workers, the government suspected that Libella funds were being used by Warsaw laymen to support the jailed workers. It is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not clear whether this is true or not. Coming so soon after the constitutional dispute, however, any sort of laymen's support for the workers represented a serious problem for the party leadership. Laymen could become increasingly active critics of party policy, using the Church's political influence as their base while allowing the episcopate to keep a discreet distance from partisan politics. The government evidently felt it had to minimize the influence these groups could have.

The problems of the KIK and *Wiez* began in December, when their leaders were informed they could no longer use Libella funds to finance their activities. This step was formalized in January when the government issued a decree transferring all Libella shares to the Polish Club of Catholic Intelligentsia (PKIK), a rival group set up last year by the ODiSS group. Although a court decision in March legally abolished the old Libella ownership arrangements, the withdrawal of funds from the KIK and *Wiez* has not yet come about. When it does, though, the KIK will find it difficult to keep up its schedule of lectures, discussions and other activities, and *Wiez* will have it even harder. In fact, *Wiez* might have to fold once the funds are finally cut.

It is significant that the KIK and *Wiez* are the targets of official pressure. Within the conservative Polish Church, these two groups represent the most influential spokesmen for an open, critical Catholicism. Their members have developed a socially conscious critique of Polish society without falling back on the traditional anti-Communism of the episcopate. Their undogmatic outlook makes it possible for them to agree with party policy in some cases but criticize it, from mostly leftist positions, in others. As a result, the KIK and *Wiez* groups have been at the center of the Polish Church's modest "dialogue with the modern age," and have brought about some dialogue with non-believers normally put off by the policies of the episcopate.

With official preference and funding behind the small but pro-government ODiSS group, the bridge which many laymen were trying to build between the traditional Church outlook and modern Polish society will come under heavy strain. At the moment, aggiornamento might not seem so urgent a need in Poland. The traditional piety of the people remains strong, church attendance is high, and there are more than enough vocations to fill the ranks of the clergy. But Polish society is undergoing rapid changes brought on by urbanization, education and economic development, and these changes are bound to affect the Church as well. When they do, the type of dialogue the KIK and *Wiez* groups have been promoting could play an important role. It remains to be seen whether they will be around to lead it.

TOM HENEGHAN

(*Tom Heneghan, a previous contributor, is a senior analyst for Czechoslovakia and Poland in the research department of Radio Free Europe in Munich*).

MARY OLIVER

MEAT

Driving through farm country, you know
When there are pigs nearby:

The smell, rank as an old carpet
Mice have lived in damply,

Rolls through the windows. From their world
Of fences and gluttonous feeding,

The wallowers fatten and stink
And get ready to die.

Rising from sleep, man
Knows there is no truth without

Violence, no beauty without grossness.
And in his quiet kitchen,

Luminous with hope, winged with philosophy, he lays
The bacon in the pan.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE POLITICS OF ABORTION

PETER STEINFELS

The *New York Times* does not brandish the word "outrageous" lightly. "Outrageous," however, was its summary characterization of the common policy, now emerging from the Supreme Court, Congress, and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, that abortions should not be paid for by public funds. I would like to suggest, although with much less certainty than the *Times* has as its disposal, that the emergent policy is correct.

It is easy to emphasize the self-interest that operated in the formulation of this policy. By first granting sweeping access to abortion under the rubric of "privacy" and then in fact limiting that access to those who can afford it, the Court appears to reflect, almost to the point of caricature, its own sociological makeup and its post-Nixon politics. Congress, on the other hand, cannot be faulted for responding to political pressures or reflecting sociological realities; that is what representative bodies do. Yet the politics of abortion have always been intensely emotional and narrow, with neither philosophical issues nor the public interest receiving much careful attention.

Nonetheless, the outcome of these less-than-admirable deliberations and political cross-currents strikes me as reasonable. The essence of the case for liberalized abortion laws was that the moral status of the fetus was an unsettled matter in this society, and perhaps of such a nature that it could never be settled. In such conditions, it was wrong for government to "impose" a morality. Even many citizens who felt that reasoned examination did point, with a degree of clarity, to the conclusion that fetal life deserved protection at a point earlier than most abortions had to admit that our society was perhaps too profoundly divided on the question to legislate strict controls. That was the position of numerous liberal Catholics.

The argument cuts both ways, however. If the moral status of the fetus is too unsettled for purposes of restricting abortion, then it is also too unsettled for purposes of publicly paying for abortion—except where abortion can be shown to fall unambiguously into another category of supported procedures, such as established medical therapies. Confronted by those morally opposed to abortion, its defenders have frequently responded, "No one is asking *you* to have an abortion." That no one should also ask them to pay for abortions seems equally compelling.

But what about poor women seeking abortions, some 250,000 to 300,000 of which have been funded by Medicaid yearly? Have I not constructed another of those ingenious arguments that leaves the reality of human suffering untouched?

In my view, neither side of this debate, concentrated as they have been on the symbolic issue, has the needs of these women foremost in mind. Referring to teenage pregnancies and other high-risk births, the *Times* asks, "Will the anti-abortion forces that have carried the day now form as effective a political coalition to insure humane conditions of life for these children and their parents?" Despite its resemblance to certain debater's gambits—if you're against abortion, how come you're not against killing kids in Vietnam? If you're in favor of human rights for prisoners in Chile, how come you're not in favor of rights for unborn children in New York?—the question is a fair one. Ultimately, the opponents of abortion will persuade the American public not by their propaganda or logical arguments but by their willingness to take up the burden of human tragedy in their own lives, offering personal or public assistance to those in need.

Again, however, the argument cuts both ways. Under the new policy, at least some of the poor will still receive public support for abortions, when these fall within specific categories. Another proportion will manage to pay for abortions themselves; though the ability of the poor, when motivated, to scrape up money for one-time expenses can be exploited as an alibi, it is still a reality. Such expenses can be far less debilitating than the increases in recurring expenses like utilities, rent, transportation, and food to which the poor are now regularly subjected. There will remain a proportion who want abortions, have made their moral decision, and yet are now prevented from obtaining them by the suspension of public funds. Have those without moral objections to abortion seriously considered any other alternative for these women except public funding? One former government official estimated that, in the absence of Medicaid funds, over 40,000 women would have sought illegal abortions last year, causing over 250 deaths. That suggests a magnitude of problem not necessarily beyond private resources. Could women obtaining abortions be asked to pay a voluntary "tax" for those poorer? Could those earning their livelihood from abortion contribute services? Could a private fund be raised? The *Times* suggests that until those opposed to abortion come to the aid of the poor, "the humanity of their movement will remain in doubt." What about the humanity of the movement supporting abortion? Is it unequivocally demonstrated merely by a demand for public money?

Non-governmental support for those seeking abortions and unable to pay for them would respect the rights of the poor while refusing abortion acceptance as a social policy. The tension implied in such an arrangement is, for many, a problem. For me, it is, as much as anything can be in this area, part of the solution.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE 'DEMYSTIFICATION' OF LIFE

ROBERT J. HENLE

Increasing individual violence against persons is a symptom

"It [a scientific technique] will, however, accelerate the trend toward the demystification of life that has been going on over the past century, in which life ceases to be a gift of God but, instead, becomes something we control." So spoke Nobel Laureate James D. Watson in an interview for *Prism,* May 1973. Peter Singer (in an August issue of the *New York Review of Books*) asks: "Is there any morally relevant difference between doing an experiment on a dying dog and doing it on a dying fetus?" He answers: "It is the dog that is the more intelligent, sensitive and autonomous being. How could any comparison, not unthinkingly prejudiced in favor of our own species, attribute greater dignity or integrity to the dying fetus than to the dying dog?" And, Dr. Charles Bender (reported in "Performing Abortions," Magda Denes, *Commentary* October, 1976, p. 35) reflects on his abortion practice: ". . . I have no conscious conflict over killing a fetus. . . . I don't relish delivering the fetus. . . . I think we're certainly living in a time of decreased human respect, of decreased human relationships, and of decreased sensitivity to killing off things."

There is no doubt that Dr. Watson is correct in seeing our changing attitudes toward life and human personality as part of a long-term trend. In *The Year 2000* Kahn and Wiemer identified a series of trends which they extrapolated from the past into the future of at least this century. Among these "trends" they selected is an embracive development designated as "increasingly Sensate." This is not reducible simply to the sensual or the hedonistic, but it includes a movement towards "This-worldly," "Epicurean" or "Hedonistic" attitudes. They plot this general trend from the rise of wealth and luxury in the city culture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and extend it to the year 2000 and beyond. The trend has not been without setbacks. The Franciscan movement—which began precisely in the most luxurious centers of Italian city life—was a medieval religious response. Kahn and Wiener recognize the counter-effects of the Reformation, both Protestant and Catholic, and the periodical renewals of Christian morals and decency. Yet, they see the trend growing stronger across the expanse of centuries.

This same phenomenon has been observed and commented on by any reflective thinkers from widely different points of view. Thus, Ignace Lepp (*Death and Its Mysteries*, p. 70) connects our abnormal fear of death with this sensate trend:

> Another cause of abnormal fear of death is the increasing materialism of Western civilization. I am not thinking here of the victories of dialectical materialism. Western man's psychic balance has been much more disturbed by that pragmatic materialism which is in reality endorsed by great numbers of men who intellectually profess the most elevated spiritual ideas. Given the fact that hedonism has become the supreme existential goal of life for so many, why shouldn't the prospect of having to renounce such enjoyment be considered frightening. But the widespread feeling of insecurity in the West, despite all our laws for social protection, constantly reminds us how precarious the hedonistic way of life is.

The increasing contempt for human life as such—

FATHER ROBERT J. HENLE, S.J., *former president of Georgetown University, is McDonnell Professor of Justice in American Society at Saint Louis University.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

what Watson calls the "demystification of life"—is part of that overall movement. We have come a long way since the Ages of Faith. Watson speaks approvingly of the practice in primitive tribes of abandoning babies on a hillside. No doubt he would approve of the *patria potestas* of pagan Rome and of the ancient Chinese custom of exposing baby girls. There is no reason why he would not also approve the primitive and pagan treatment of the helpless elderly. After all, he said in the same interview " 'Sacredness of life' or *anything like that* [emphasis added] is not relevant to my concerns."

The increasing disregard of "anything like that" has been manifesting itself in many ways in Western society. The increasing individual violence against persons is a symptom; the horror of Nazism was possible only because of the latest effects of this trend. It is not accidental or rhetorical that the Germans have linked their opposition to liberal abortion laws to their experience of Nazism. The German Federal Constitutional Court, in striking down permissive abortion legislation said:

> Underlying our Basic Law are principles for the structuring of the state that may be understood only in the light of the historical experience and the spiritual-moral confrontation with the previous system of Nazism. Human beings possess an inherent worth as individuals . . . which uncompromisingly demands unconditional respect for the life of every individual human being, even for the apparently socially 'worthless.'

The Nazi experience made Germans aware of the "demystification" trend and has called forth a positive reassertion of the moral and spiritual values of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, especially with regard to human life.

This brings us to a primary consideration of great importance—the relation between a legal system and the values of the larger society, of the people.

Law and Values

On the one hand, the legal and judicial system, especially of a religiously disestablished state (the situation in Israel, for example, may be quite different) does not and should not automatically enforce religious principles or even all moral values. The fact that abortion is regarded as a great sin by all the high religions (including until quite recently all Protestant and Jewish sects), or that it is regarded as a basic moral evil, does not justify legislative or judicial action. Lying, for example, is generally recognized as a sin and a moral evil, yet the law penalizes it only in special cases such as perjury. Abortion is indeed a matter for personal religious and moral consciences, although this does not, as some seem to think, preclude legislation about it. After all, murder, theft, rape and most of the offenses listed in the criminal code are matters for the individual moral and religious conscience.

A legal system does embody, as the German court said, the basic values of the society to which it belongs. The issue of abortion is not specifically religious or even moral; the issue is a matter of civil and human legal rights, namely whether the law and the courts will truly protect the civil and human rights of all human beings. The principle here appealed to has been a basic commitment both of our society and of our legal system. The basic question is whether the respect for human rights has become so eroded in our society that the courts can now reflect that erosion by excluding groups of human beings from their protection. The courts have traditionally shown a special concern for the defenseless, the helpless and the underprivileged. This appears now to be reversed.

The issue is not whether the Catholic Church is trying to impose its religious beliefs on our pluralistic society. As Dr. Harold O. J. Brown, a Protestant anti-abortion leader, said: "Abortion is not a religious issue. It is a question of the nature of human life. All great religions —not only Catholic—have something to say about this. *As humans* we all have a stake in it" [emphasis added].

The real question is: Has the "demystification" of human life and the contempt for human beings gone so far in our society that the courts, by legal dodges and definitions, can pay lip service to the tradition while excluding thousands of human beings from their concern? Justice White in dissent said, "I cannot accept the Court's exercise of its clear power of choice by interposing a constitutional barrier to state efforts to protect human life and by investing mothers and doctors with the constitutionally protected right to exterminate it," that is, to commit a murder which will now not be included under the legal definition of murder or manslaughter. Justice White (and Justice Rehnquist) are reasserting the historic and current context of our law, namely, the value commitments in the society and its general culture. The protection of civil and human rights, especially the right to life, of all human beings has been both an accepted ideal in our society and a basic premise of our political and legal system.

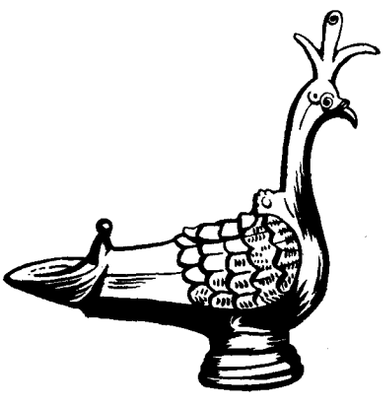
Given this basis and these premises, it is perfectly clear that the law and the courts should undertake to protect unborn human beings just as much as those who have emerged from the womb. That protection should begin with the first moment of conception and continue throughout human life. The scientific and medical evidence is clear; there can be no doubt that at the moment of conception a new life entity comes into being, distinct from the mother and in the species of human beings. There was a time when physiological and medical knowledge was so imperfect it could be thought that in the earlier stages of pregnancy the fertilized ovum was a part of the woman's body and was not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"quickened." This is nothing but bad physiology and is contrary to fact. In 1859 the AMA Committee on Criminal Abortion attributed the widespread practice of abortion to "mistaken and exploded medical dogmas."

I have been stressing the validity of the anti-abortion position within the traditional premises of our legal system and of our total society precisely to emphasize a broader issue—*The extent to which the values of the sensate trend have permeated our society and are eroding the moral character of that society.* The abortion issue has forced thousands of Americans to face this fundamental issue about which philosophers, sociologists and theologians have been speaking with no social effect.

There is plenty of evidence that our society is not prepared to renounce its basic values with regard to human life, but there is also plenty of evidence that in the minds of many citizens the matter is at least clouded and in some minds human life has been reduced almost to the level of animal life. Now should this trend continue and should those who would uphold in society



our traditional and basic system of values become a minority, a small minority, the law itself would necessarily reflect this. We would have a reversion to pagan legal systems in which the protection of human life is not primary.

A practical conclusion of this is that even a constitutional amendment to establish a constitutional guarantee for the basic value and sanctity of all human life within our legal and political system might indeed not solve the problem permanently. Should such an amendment be passed, obviously the pro-life movement would have obtained a victory and would have stopped at least for a time the erosion within the legal system of the protection of human life. If, however, the trend I have identified above would meanwhile continue within our society, there would come a point at which the amendment itself would become obsolete and inoperative, a point at which therefore the legal system would itself reflect the erosion of respect for human life in society and begin to enact into law provisions permitting all sorts of violations of the sanctity of human life.

Consequently, it is not enough to take political and legal action. In fact, I am not convinced that working for a constitutional amendment is the essential way to achieve the goal of the pro-life movement. What is needed is a resurrection within our society of the basic humanistic and religious and moral traditions which gave us the fundamental insight into the inviolability of human life and the sanctity of human life. This means in turn a great ethical revival and, I believe also, a great religious revival. The potential for that revival exists in the United States today. The religious resources that are dormant in large segments of our population can be brought to a Great Awakening. If the pro-life movement is to achieve a permanent goal, then it must address itself to the restoration of the moral conscience of society and not merely to legalities.

One can hope that the violent confrontation between the pro-abortionists and the pro-life groups in this country might create a consciousness similar to that created in Germany by the Nazi experience. Perhaps we can confront the inactive part of our society with the choice that is basic here, namely a choice to accept the fundamental right to life of all human beings or to accept the erosion and limitation of that right by a series of qualifications that inevitably will more and more reduce the protection of human life in our legal system. And if their reaction is strong enough, we may reach the position enunciated by the high German court which asserted that the sanctity of human life was a value of of society and a proper object of German law.

And so now to return to where I began—the explicit position of Dr. Watson, which is, I am sure, shared by and sympathized with by many materialistic and humanistic scientists and other persons in our society, well-educated though they may otherwise be. It is not merely the case that men like Dr. Watson advocate some qualified abortions. He does appeal to cases such as the severely abnormal and handicapped child around which a great deal of controversy and a great deal of sentimentality has been developed, but what he proposes goes far beyond any sentimental sympathy for the special cases. He proposes simply that by a legal fiction, such as the Supreme Court used, babies would be declared not living until three days after birth. This, he says, would give the parents and the doctors an opportunity to decide whether or not they want the baby, whether or not the baby should live. There is no reason why, given such a decision, the period should not be extended to three months or even a year, no reason why analogous cases in the course of life could not be covered by a legal fiction which would make the destruction of human beings simply not murder. And so we would be back at the general pagan disregard for human life. It is quite obvious that the mad scientist of our old-fashioned horror movies is alive and well and is living in our universities and in our research centers.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Many persons have realized with a shock that large numbers of Americans are quite willing to support the 1973 Supreme Court decision and the revocation of laws against the murder of the unborn and of others. This shock is a sign of our unawareness of the moral decadence which has been growing within our society. Too many of those who still retain a fundamental religious conviction and who fundamentally are trying to lead a religious life, have at the same time adopted the materialistic ideals of our society and engaged in the same mad pursuit of pleasure that has characterized all sophisticated paganism. Perhaps the abortion issue will bring many of these persons up abruptly to face the issue between their religious convictions and their materialistic mode of life, their moral obligations and their acquiescence in so much immorality in society. A revival of morality and decency will require—not picketing, not legal action, not arguments—but an inner change in many religious persons that will make marked differences in their external behavior. Thus we are dealing with problems far deeper and broader than the abortion issue. This is a matter for all religious leaders and all moral men and women.

If we cannot achieve a revival, Kahn and Wiener's projection of the Sensate trend will turn out to be a prediction of the total permeation of society by materialism and sensuality, its total dehumanization amid moral anarchy.

THE REIGN IN SPAIN

KENNETH E. MOORE

The election created many heroes and a few villains

The most consequential decisions made in Spain in the twenty months since the death of Franco have been made behind the scenes. They were made by the Spanish king, Juan Carlos I, in association with a select group of articulate and pragmatic advisers who began their political careers in the Franco era. The most important decision they made was to risk democracy; to go as far as a modern state dare in trusting its future entirely to the will of an unpredictable electorate. It was an authentic gamble, for once the commitment was made a passionate electorate in reprisal against forty years of fascist autocracy could vote to wipe out the past and turn the government over to a majority of the left, who once in power would immediately be at odds with the well-entrenched traditional and private sector, setting the stage for all the exigencies of clearly defined class conflict.

The center won because the majority of voters were cautious, but the final tally reveals a powerful socialist bloc. The last poll before the election showed the Socialist Party of Spanish Workers (PSOE, Partido Socialista Obrero Español) ahead with 28.9 percent of the vote as against 25.6 percent for the Center (UCD) led by monarch-appointed Premier Adolfo Suarez. This poll as much as anything may have contributed to the center's victory for there is no doubt that great numbers of socialist supporters decided to vote the safe center now and vote their true feelings in the next election. Another election must be held some time in the next four years and the most powerful leader of the left will surely be a young labor lawyer from Seville named Felipe Gonzalez. At thirty-five, he now stands as spokesman for the loyal opposition. It is with him or someone like him that King Juan Carlos will in years to come join in the task of organizing and governing the New Spain.

The Spanish election created many heroes and a few villains. The most glamorous hero was Premier Adolfo Suarez whose six-by-nine-foot picture was the most dominant artifact in the Spanish nation for three weeks before the election. A shrewd and articulate public figure, he skillfully united a disorganized social democratic center by submitting his own name for a seat in the Cortes (Spanish Parliament). The center he led was an accommodation not a party, and those who voted for it voted for the man who organized it—surely not the diffuse coalition itself. Suarez began the election in a somewhat heroic stance for he more than anyone else is seen as the architect of Spain's democratizing process; and as the man who had the courage to allow the entry of the Communist party in Spain's first election in forty-one years.

Another hero created in the electoral process was Santiago Carillo, leader of the Communist party. Though at the beginning he had been feared, as the campaign ended he had acquired many admirers and some few votes. He has come to be trusted for his fearlessness and basic honesty. He is seen as a wily old revolutionary who in hard-fought campaigning will say what others dare

KENNETH E. MOORE, *an associate professor of urban anthropology at the University of Notre Dame, is the author of* Those of the Street: The Catholic-Jews of Mallorca.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not, or fear to. He stands as the challenger of hypocrisy and class privilege. Throughout the campaign he spoke loudly for abortion and divorce, arguing that the rich secure the latter through the Church and the former in the clinics of London.

The third heroic figure is of course Felipe Gonzalez who maintains correctly that he is the leader of the largest single party (as against coalitions) in Spanish politics. Other socialist parties were unable to match either the organizing skills or the talent for creating symbols and images that were so much a part of the PSOE campaign. Gonzalez provided charisma and "gancho" to the socialist cause and he and the party are now inseparable in the minds of those who supported both.

These three figures and one "heavy," Manuel Fraga Iribarne, dominated the campaign but the real hero of the Spanish election of 1977 was the king. There can be no mistake about this. He acquired immense power as have few people in Spanish history; and history will record that he used it thoughtfully, courageously and at times brilliantly. He did not democratize Spain alone, but after advice and counsel it was always with him and his conscience that the final decision rested.

At a time in history when royalty's role is to live mutely as living symbols of national unity, to aspire to dullness and ceremonious dimwittery, Juan Carlos began his career in true form in the sixties. Chosen by Franco as against his father, Don Juan (the son of the last king of Spain, Alfonso XIII), Juan Carlos was assigned the dubious task of maintaining order in Spain after the Caudillo's death. In the role of heir apparent he was a study in royal innocuousness. He trained as a jet pilot and entertained himself with yachting. His only royal failing was an inability to smile. The future of Spain seemed locked in the hands of an unimaginative militarist who would rule with the army from a hidden center of power. Spain's democratic future seemed attainable only through violence. In the last years of the Franco dictatorship even those who hated the Caudillo passionately feared his death and the violence that must surely follow.

The assumption of power by the king revealed astuteness and courage from the very beginning. The problems he faced were primarily those which remained from before the Civil War and had been "resolved" by Franco in executive orders and the unchallengeable power of the state. The problems were varied—the rights of regions, land reform, the role of the Church, women's rights, the distribution of wealth and the freedoms of press and assembly. Immediately after Franco's death in 1975 the king defused two of the major threats to stability by granting regions the right to write, publish, perform and sing in their traditional languages. Also, he did away with the hated censorship of the Franco era which had stifled journalism, theater, art and education since 1939. The freedom was total. The most virulent critics of the Franco regime now brag that "we can read, print, publish anything—that is to say, anything!" Release from censorship and a revised election law led to a proliferation of newspapers, journals, magazines and political parties. Those who thought they knew Spanish journalism a few years ago now faced a whole new array of daily and weekly papers. Spanish politics became incomprehensible with almost 6,000 candidates and 160 political parties.

Thus, the election campaign this year began in confusion, and a fear of violence. But there was little doubt that the government was sponsoring an authentic and entirely valid poll of the electorate. The state-owned TV was opened to every legal party. Candidates with no hope of winning claimed their ten minutes on the national media every third or fourth evening during the campaign. The range was incredible, from the extreme right of Mediterranean fascism presented in ideologically distinct forms, to neo-Francoists, centrist democrats, social democrats, socialists and communists of both west European and Maoist orientation. There were autonomists from Catalonia, the Balearics, Valencia, the Basque region, and so on. The walls of every thoroughfare in the country were plastered with election posters. By the thirteenth of June the litter of handbills left every town and city looking like the aftermath of a gigantic New Year's Eve party. More than 15,000 political rallies (*mitins*) had been held throughout the country, drawing crowds in the hundreds, and up to sixty thousand. The campaign ended on midnight June 13th, to allow for a day of reflection before that most important day which the newspapers referred to as 15-J.

On the Eve

On the evening of the thirteenth the campaign climaxed with a nationwide TV program. Political parties with candidates in more than twenty-five provinces were each allowed ten minutes to seal their case with their outstanding spokesman. With positions selected by lot, the favorite UCD began with a forthright though cautious presentation by Premier Adolfo Suarez. Practically unknown ten months ago, Suarez revealed the brilliance and personal skills that led to his selection by the king to lead the transition to democracy. A man who clearly understands the complexities of the modern world asked an electorate which does not to trust him to continue his rapid but measured pace of governmental reorganization. As goodlooking as Charles Percy and like him a product of the world of managers, Suarez approached the video camera audaciously and without gimmickry, and holding the cards of incumbency, moderation and progressivism, he said, "What I promise is what I can promise." "From the Center I can work with any combination of parties elected." His flawless presentation

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

clearly assured him a voice equal to any other in forming the new parliament.

The Popular Socialist Party leader Enrique Tierno-Galvan appeared second in this final nationwide public meeting which matched in importance in this election the first Carter-Ford debate in the U.S. last fall. Tierno-Galvan spoke so slowly, he seemed tired. He presented a position so general it was meaningless. He promised to work for a constitution that was short and flexible and to move the country forward. His party had failed to capture the imagination of the electorate, and his appearance on TV revealed part of the reason why.

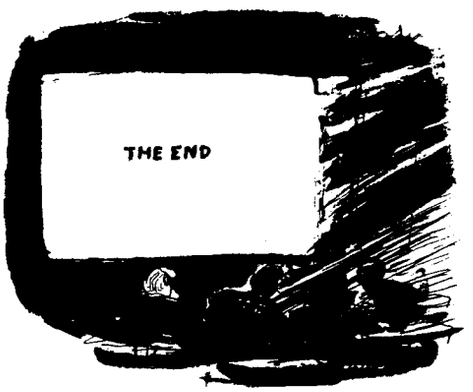
The third position was won by the Communist party and its Secretary General, Santiago Carillo. It was difficult to imagine that this old man had been a public enemy for 36 years; that his secret entry into the country ten years ago had been considered a threat to the nation, and that he himself had spent the last decade underground. He spoke without text for he had given the same rousing talk many times in packed bull rings and soccer fields around the country. The talk was humanist and liberal in tone. He spoke for the young, the unemployed and for women. But he also defended the rights of small business. If he had any enemies, it was only monopolistic capitalism. It was a talk that could have been given at the national Democratic Convention in America without causing a stir.

The next important speaker was Felipe Gonzalez of the Spanish Workers Socialist Party. When 160 parties sought to attract the attention of the electorate, the PSOE revealed itself the master of symbolism and media. Its party symbol was a clenched fist that held a rose. Its posters appealed to Spanish familism by asking an end to families separated by the emigration of fathers to North European factories. Its posters showed a young father at a railroad station, carrying a suitcase in his right hand and a rose in his left returning to Spain, employment and family. An equally important symbol was the face of Felipe Gonzalez, young, with working-class good looks; a man from the South, a bit crude, yet brilliant and caring. He had captured the public's imagination as had "El Cordobes" in the bullring during the sixties. It is this image and the program of moderate socialism that will stand against the image of corporately guided moderation in the years ahead.

The remaining speakers were studies in futility, the most celebrated failure being that of Manuel Fraga Iribarne, head of the Popular Alliance (Allianza Popular), the choice of those who still yearned for the safety and predictability of the Franco era. Under Franco, Fraga as Minister of Information and Tourism was a voice of change in an era that cried for it. In the election he opted for caution, for holding on to the benefits produced in the Franco era. He appealed to fear, to the threat of foreign-based parties and of those who would gamble with the social order. Like the public meetings of the Communists, Fraga's rallies were emotion-packed and ecstatic. Cries of "Fraga" and "Franco" beat out the finale of his every public appearance. However, Fraga was also hounded by detractors as he toured the nation. The slogan "Fraga, España no te traga" (Fraga, Spain doesn't swallow you) was the best known incantation of the campaign.

A few evenings prior to this final TV appearance, Fraga's supporter, former premier Carlos Arias Navarro taunted the nation with a future chaos should it move leftward. The country will soon be in a "pre-revolutionary state," said Arias on TV. In a period of transition with high unemployment, inflation, an unfavorable balance of trade and violence from Basque terrorists, few would take serious issue with him. Yet less than five percent of the electorate cared to follow him or Fraga back to the security of the Franco era. Appeals to patriotism ("Only Spain is important"), Christianity and security lured less voters than Communist appeals to a faintly defined future. Those few who voted the Allianza Popular are alleged to be those still clinging to pensions, awards and statuses acquired in the Franco era.

Fraga's appearance on this final night of TV campaigning openly revealed the wounds suffered by a man who had started the campaign as one of the most potentially powerful leaders of the nation and ended it as the spokesman of a rejected and insignificant minority party. A veteran campaigner, he was nevertheless the most obviously nervous of all the party leaders who appeared that final night on TV. He moved from a stumbling and fumbling lecture to a shrill and almost hysterical oration. He spoke to the wrong camera repeatedly, and technicians changing backdrops only added to the disconcerting confusion. He appealed for patriotism, caution and protection of the family, and even his supporters had to be embarrassed. Fraga is not a hollow man. He is a capable administrator, a first-rate scholar and a master of oratory. What the public saw was not an inadequate personage, but the most powerful of men crushed by the cruel realities of the electoral process.



After a day of reflection and a day of voting that brought out eighty percent of those eligible, the results

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

showed an unambiguous victory for the Adolfo Suarez center. With almost fifty percent of the popular vote and a proportional number of seats in the bicameral Cortes, an alliance with any minor bloc would give the UCD the majority it needs to govern. The Spanish Workers Socialist Party with almost thirty-five percent of the seats has clearly emerged as Spain's other powerful party. It is well known from the simplest worker or peasant to the powerful heads of state that the real strength of this party was hidden in the final returns. It was heard everywhere, "I'm voting for Suarez this time. Next time, Felipe." It is Suarez who will be responsible for all the hard decisions in a country clearly in an economic crisis. It is for the disenchanted that Gonzalez will speak, and this may well be the majority in the next election, two, three or four years from now.

The election results clearly reveal a dying Francoist right, a Communist party with voice but no power and a Christian Democratic movement that never got off the ground. An alliance of centrists and a well-organized socialist party portend a two-party nation presently in the hands of the centrists, but with the future in the grasp of the socialists and the man of the future, Felipe Gonzalez.

'ONE OF THE LUCKIER ONES'

ROBERT JOE STOUT

Rehabilitation or punishment?

Ohio prison officials considered 25-year-old Jack McKey "one of the luckier ones." He responded well to pre-sentencing evaluation and despite a background of juvenile arrests, assault, suspected armed robbery and firearms violation conviction and parole, he demonstrated a willingness to thrust the past behind him and begin a new life. Black, a high school drop-out who'd tried to enlist in both the U.S. Army and the Air Force and been turned down, McKey had grown up (with eight or nine brothers and sisters) on the fringes of a rural Ohio town watching his parents raise chickens and do odd jobs for the crop-conscious white community.

A truant, booze-stealer and perpetual runaway, he spent the better part of his adolescence in juvenile halls, foster homes and farms for delinquent children. His first arrest as an adult came shortly after his eighteenth birthday. He moved to Cleveland to find work as an unskilled laborer but was laid off repeatedly as the economy wavered. He gambled his unemployment checks away at a local pool hall, then was arrested as the bag-man in a con game. He emerged from county jail broke, jobless and uncaring.

Three years of catch-as-catch-can employment, petty crime (including transporting drugs and soliciting for a prostitute) and attempts for a strong-armed robbery which netted McKey less than $6.00. Optimistic prison evaluators enrolled him in a comprehensive rehabilitation course. Through group encounter and therapy sessions, he unloaded part of his burden of frustration, confusion and hatred. He began to see himself in context with the world, to learn that his personality was integrally tied to assumptions about that world and, consequently, about himself.

He took and passed enough high school level courses to earn a diploma. From once-a-week group therapy, he progressed into intensive counseling. His analysts, like many institution-connected professionals, were Rogerians and behaviorists. His adaptability to prison life improved so much under their supervision that he was recommended for early parole by both the hard-nosed prison superintendent and the counseling staff. Three-years-and-two-months after beginning what could have been a ten-year term, Jack McKey stepped back into public life.

Seven months later he sat, hunched and handcuffed, on a bench in a Columbus, Ohio, police station. He had been arrested, with three other black ex-convicts, after forcibly breaking into and stripping a small East-side drugstore. The foreman presiding over the grand jury that indicted him noted his prison record and lamented that so much in resources and energy had been "wasted" on a recidivist. After his conviction—he admitted his guilt—the trial judge assessed the maximum penalty allowed under Ohio law. The flow of conservative sentiment against "rehabilitation" as opposed to punishment used him as an example to enforce their drive for stiffer sentences and less coddling of prisoners.

Why did McKey fail?

The question nags penologists in every state in the U.S. Two out of three indicted lawbreakers in Los Angeles County have previous felony convictions. The "turn-around" time between release from California Youth Authority and re-conviction on new charges is

ROBERT JOE STOUT *is a novelist and journalist living in California.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

estimated at eight months in the San Francisco Bay area. Graduates of intensive "reconditioning" programs were reported to have reverted back to criminal life—including drug addiction and violent crime—within three months in three Midwestern states.

Sociologists counter that recidivism is a community problem. Those who administer prison rehabilitation programs point out that the difficulties involved in "re-adapting" an under-educated, ghetto-reared felon to understand and strive for "acceptable" middle-class goals overwhelm both the agency and the participant. They cite statistics of their own to prove that a "surprising" percentage of prison graduates successfully re-enter society.

McKey, "one of the luckier ones," cooperated from the time of his first evaluation onward. Prison authorities agree that little or no rehabilitation has been attempted on those who resist counseling and/or participation in education and vocational programs. A close look at the results of California's now defunct attempt to sort, define and renew offenders through indeterminate sentences and Adult Authority evaluation and placement shows that the predominate percentage of "rehabilitated" offenders were white adults with high school educations, i.e., individuals who quite possibly would have rehabilitated themselves upon their release anyway.

In many instances, psychiatric conditioning replaced analysis (or analyses degenerated into group expression programs which relieved temporary hostility but did little to prepare the long-termer for a life outside prison walls). Self-help education and betterment programs benefited only those who were achievement-oriented.

In all of California's principal prison facilities, including the Napa Detainment Center and the Preston School for Boys, rule has been racial and rehabilitation a toy jangled jingoistically before the public. An aide to since-departed Chief Ray Procunier published an account in the *Sacramento Bee* stating that "our basic policy (for hard-core criminals at San Quentin and Folsom) was to throw them together and let them kill each other."

Similar conditions exist in most states. While the rhetoric about "soft" judges and "cry-baby" juries continues, prisoner rehabilitation primarily has been attitude-training—a psychological gloss over the real problems of commitment and return to active life outside the walls. The "unlucky ones" spend their prison years in primeval power struggles that include blackmail, assassination and homosexual rape. Racial antagonisms cohere into exaggerations of the conflicts in the non-prison world. Words and gestures become symbolic manifestations of prescribed attitudes. Any deviations are quickly curtailed, either by prison officials or gangland chiefs. Psychologically, the prisoner learns not to feel. Technologically, he learns to become a better criminal.

The "luckier ones," like McKey, are taught how to adapt to society. Unfortunately, no one is teaching society how to adapt to them. Their release from "the joint" is accompanied by a handshake, a few clothes and the name of a parole or probation officer. Their newly acquired vocational skills may or may not be in demand in a society where unemployment among job-seekers without prison records fluctuates between six and twenty-five percent. Their retraining into being able to adapt to, and understand, society does not prevent them from returning to the environment that keyed their entrance into crime in the first place.

Few companies hire ex-cons. (Federal and state governments, as employers, have no place for them.) Few convicts who served over three years have wives, girl friends or families waiting to accept them. Alienated, unemployable, without resources or prospects, they drift into old associations, old habits. Four times in three months, Jack McKey begged his parole officer to find some kind of job for him. Apparently the young man did what he could but he was only two years out of college, had a double case load and was looking for a job in some other field; he only could recommend institutions and private employment channels that Jack already had tried.

Situations like Jack's have brought penologists in several states, including Ohio and California, to strive for a redefinition of rehabilitation. Crime undoubtedly has strong psychological tie-ins. Genetic differences key separate responses from individuals brought up in similar backgrounds. But analyses alone will not transform a practicing criminal into Mr. Solid Citizen.

For Mr. Solid Citizen, in this country, earns money, pays taxes and buys property. Even Freud has failed to dent a society rooted on the basic premise of working to earn money to buy goods to achieve identification. The white-collar criminal often re-achieves a position in society because he has the background, and resources, to get—or create—a job.

Jack McKey didn't have that ability. His rehabilitation—and the rehabilitation of hundreds of thousands of incarcerated Americans—should have been based on the actualities of American life: work or you lose out. An on-the-job training program centered around equipping first-time offenders for actual (not theoretical) employment would save millions of dollars for victims of recidivist crimes.

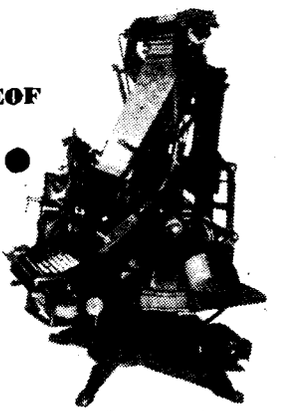
If companies willing to hire ex-cons were given tax and employment incentives, and parolees released only when actual, permanent jobs had been found for them, the "gap time" in adjustment between two drastically different styles of living would be substantially reduced. The ex-con would have the opportunity to involve himself in productive non-criminal activity (with all its American middle-class difficulties and frustrations). He would, in fact, have an alternative, a chance to change. Rehabilitation would be a physical actuality, not political

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

claptrap or the theoretical re-directioning of a man's mind.

The steel blade in the gangleader's palm and the steel revolver on the guard's hip have been the only rehabilitation a majority of America's imprisoned has been permitted to experience. If punishment is necessary to curtail crime, be it so. But let's not pretend that our penal institutions offer anything else.

THE MEMORY THEREOF



PRESS

Sometime in the late spring of 1968—I think it must have been in mid-May, between the first and second busts at Columbia University—I spent an hour squashed into a booth in the West End Bar next to a young radical named Juan Gonzalez. There were other reporters and students there but I've forgotten their names. What I remember is Juan's youth, his confidence in the imminence of the revolution, his conviction that SDS would fill a place in the history book on a level with the First International, and his scorn for the press.

This was a finely honed thing. He had been all but living with reporters for a month and knew as many first names as a press officer on a presidential campaign plane. Gabe and Nick and Sylvan and Joe and Roy all wanted to know what Juan thought, and where he could be reached later in the day, and would he be free for dinner for a little talk on background, and was it true that Mark Rudd's reputation as a revolutionary swordsman explained the presence of all those terrific-looking Barnard girls making coffee and running the mimeo in the SDS office?

Columbia had a quasi-military atmosphere at that time. There were two camps—the administration and the SDS—and rumors of blow and counter-blow flew back and forth. Demonstrations were almost daily, police were everywhere, kids with bruises and bandages from the first bust were conspicuous, and there was no telling when the next big push would come. Columbia, in short, was a story. Reporters were not merely sent up to cover the revolution as it unfolded in its uneven way. They stayed up there from morning till night, writing mood pieces and analytic pieces and personality pieces whenever they could put together a few anecdotes about Rudd or Josie Duke.

This naturally involved a great deal of hanging about and idle chatter. One of the people the reporters hung about was Juan Gonzalez. Theirs was a star-crossed meeting, since the reporters were of course only passing through while Juan, by temperament a gentle soul, had the fierce commitment of a kid trying to prove that his parents, teachers and country were wrong when they suggested this was only a "phase," a sort of late-adolescent political equivalent to what Benjamin Spock so rightly calls "the terrible twos."

"You shouldn't be writing for the press," said Juan in the West End Bar after the revolution had been called for the day. "You should be organizing to fight your own oppression."

That's the only thing I can quote from memory but I remember the drift of the rest. It was that reporters were hirelings of the ruling class, a shallow and superficial lot who covered feast and famine with the same easy indifference. Reporters did not care about things. Reporters had no memory. Insofar as reporters played a role in the historical dialectic it was reactionary, obstructionist, oppressive and counterrevolutionary. Objectivity was a myth. Reporters habitually missed the point. Reporters were summer soldiers, with no commitment to anything but their paychecks. Reporters never looked back. When the story died at Columbia—in his heart Juan did not believe it would die; he thought Columbia was April, 1917, if not the Winter Palace—the reporters would all pack up and carry off the same trifling mental baggage with which they had arrived.

This is probably the most common charge against reporters. With variations to suit the circumstances it is entertained, if not formally brought, by almost everybody who becomes the object of the press's fickle attentions. Environmental activists, losing presidential candidates and Farah Fawcett-Majors all know in their hearts that reporters are only passing through. Juan Gonzalez put the charge with unusually explicit force but I have heard the same thing, expressed in more guarded form, by retired officials of the CIA. This raises two questions. The first is whether the charge is right, and the answer is yes. If the press has any memory at all it is the memory of the *idiot savant* for nutty and irrelevant detail. George Willig may take up sheep-ranching in Australia or retire to a monastery in Bhutan, but you can be sure he cannot die in conditions of such obscurity—and I wish him a long, happy life—that the *New York Times* will not take note, nor recall in his obituary that he once climbed the World Trade Center.

Only the details go into the files, and are resurrected whenever a radical of the '60s surrenders or is captured by the FBI—most recently Phoebe Hirsch and Robbie Roth of the Weathermen, who surfaced in Chicago earlier this year, and before them Susan Saxe, Cameron David Bishop, David S. Fine, Pat Swinton, Jane Alpert, Dwight Alan Armstrong and others. Stories about them contain the dates of alleged crimes and a word or two

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of ancient history about long-ago events like the SDS split in June, 1969, which led to the Weatherpeople. But the movement of which they were the late efflorescence, that passionate mentality of protest which began with Mississippi and Vietnam and colored so much of what a whole generation thought and felt—all that is missing.

I was reminded of this not long ago by a Paul Goldberger story in the *Times* under the jarring (to me) headline, "Taste in Replacing the House on 11th Street." The house on 11th street, you may recall, was destroyed by an explosion and fire in March, 1970, when some Weatherpeople in the basement crossed a wire while making bombs. Three of them died, including a friend of Juan Gonzalez named Ted Gold, a short, solid young radical with an excitable, engaging manner. He was one of those people, not quite a buffoon, whose role in SDS when I knew him at Columbia was to be liked. His enthusiasm was so infectious, his faith in the revolution so untroubled and easy, that it was hard to believe the organization of which he was a member could contain within it anything ugly, sinister, or cruel. An illusion, alas.

Goldberger's story was about a dispute concerning plans for the long-delayed construction of a house to replace the Greek Revival building destroyed in the explosion. Some community activists protested the design for the new building because it would include an odd front wall pivoting out from the facade. Opponents of the plan felt it would destroy the historic integrity of the row of buildings in which the new structure would take its place, "a comment," Goldberger argued, "that would be more appropriate if [the new owners of the site] were proposing to bomb the old house, not replace it.

"Unfortunately, the house is already destroyed; the row is no longer extant. Nothing will change that fact—even a reproduction of a Greek Revival design will not restore the row as if the new house had come from the 1840s instead of the 1970s. So it is foolish to pretend that the row can be precisely what it was."

An unexceptionable argument. I'm on Goldberger's side here. A pivoting wall sounds inconvenient to me, but it would have the virtue of marking the site in some permanent way, of reminding all future passers-by that something happened here, something abrupt, violent and upsetting.

I wonder if Juan Gonzalez saw that story and was reminded of the friend who had died there. The last time I saw him he was sitting on a couch without legs in the decrepit office of the Young Lords in East Harlem. He was through with SDS by then, convinced they were irredeemably white, middle class and North American. Not angrily, but sadly convinced. The revolution he wanted to make was in Latin America, starting with Puerto Rico although he himself had closer ties to Venezuela. A thousand years had passed since he had listed the sins of the press in the West End Bar. Now the Young Lords have gone the way of SDS. Juan's fate I don't know.

It would not bother Juan to know that he has been forgotten, but I suspect he might have an ironic comment or two about the ease with which the press has forgotten The Movement. It was always referred to in the upper case, as something specific and concrete, if hard to describe in a way which would include factional enemies. The Movement was much more of a thing than the Fifties. It had an internal growth in the way the Fifties did not, and it created and left a great deal behind, where the Fifties only passed. Whatever the movement was—a group of people, a climate of activism, a mood of outrage, protest and rejection—it has disappeared all but entirely from the pages of the *New York Times*. If it is alive, it is alive in the manner of the memory of childhood in grown men and women, a kind of anchor for identity. The institutions are dormant, defunct or moribund, but the people who created and ran or were content simply to be represented by them will always draw much of their sense of who they are from what they were.

This leads to my second question. If we grant that the press has the memory of a housefly, does it follow that this is a bad thing, a weakness or failing or error of shallowness to be corrected? The forgotten are not likely to agree, but it seems to me the answer is no.

Graduate theses have been written about the role of the press in egging things on—the Great Red Scare, McCarthyism, the Cold War, student activism, the riots in Newark and Detroit, the rise of John F. Kennedy, the fall of Nixon. No doubt there's something in the claim, if you stick to the details, but in a broader way I think Juan Gonzalez is right.

In its heart, if it has a heart, the press is glacially indifferent. Individual reporters may commit themselves but the press as a whole is unfriendly to commitment. In its heart it does not care. It simply records—Hitler on the way up, Hitler on the way down, the beginning and end of depressions, the birth and death of movements. The individuals whose history it records make use of it on their way up and cling to it on the way down, but the press at best is polite. It may have its little affairs of the heart, but the sentiment does not run deep, as Kennedy would have discovered if he had lived, and as Kissinger has. The press breaks cleanly and forgets and moves on, leaving the rest to history. If it did anything else we would have to control it.

THOMAS POWERS

Change of Address

Please give four to six weeks' notice and enclose a current *Commonweal* label.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE SCREEN

With Liza Minnelli playing straight man to Robert De Niro, *New York, New York* is certainly funny enough to be a comedy. With De Niro playing side man, on saxophone, for Ms. Minnelli's singing—there are twenty-four oldies and four original numbers in the film, many sung by her—it's also musical enough to be a musical. Yet it's really neither a musical nor a comedy. It's a movie. Martin Scorsese is too compulsively a movie director for it to have been anything else. Even if he had wanted to, he couldn't have subordinated his own performance to that of his stars or the music, nor could he have made the sort of musical that might as well have been played on a stage. In a musical, as the term itself specifies, the music takes precedence. All the effort to impart emotion is saved for the songs and concentrated in them, which is why the plots of musicals often seem so weak. But Scorsese goes about making his musical the other way round. Music is only a means in his film, not an end—and only one means among many at that. In fact, the best thing about his use of music is that he often makes it seem almost incidental.

Consider the way he uses music in one scene late in the film. The scene is set in a club in Harlem, the only place where saxophonist Jimmy Doyle (De Niro) can find an audience hip enough to dig him. The reason for the scene, however, is not to provide an occasion for the music in it. It's to provide an occasion for a reprise of an earlier scene and thereby make us feel the futility of Jimmy's relationship with his wife Francine (Minnelli) —to make us see how that relationship is, literally, doomed to repeat itself. In the earlier scene Jimmy and Francine go to another club, downtown, to hear a band whose leadership he lost when she had to quit as its singer because she was pregnant. Unable to bear the band's current success with its club date, Jimmy leaves Francine at their table and goes into an alcove where the bar is to get drunk. Then when the next set begins, he goes up on the bandstand, picks a fist fight with the band's new leader, and gets bounced out of the club.

In the reprise of this scene at the club in Harlem, although the gig is Jimmy's, the problem is still someone else's success—his wife's, this time. She has come up to the club to discuss a record contract she's being offered, which again puts him in flight from their table into an alcove off on the side of the room. But this time she's the one who gets drunk, belting down every sticky grenadine concoction on the menu to drown her misery while a black singer does Lena Horne's old number, "Honeysuckle Rose." When Jimmy's next set begins, it is Francine who now staggers woozily up to the bandstand, though her motives are the opposite of what his were earlier. Where his idea was disruption, hers is reconciliation. He has kicked off the set with his rendition of a tune he and she wrote together. She interprets this as a friendly gesture and is coming up to take a bow or perhaps even sing. But he immediately jumps into a solo that precludes any duet between them and virtually blows her off the bandstand and out of the club.

When you notice how the music is used in them, you realize how purely directorial these two club scenes are. Moviemaking is not here being made a showcase for a musical number, the way it ordinarily is in a musical. On the contrary, the music is being relegated to the dramatic needs of the film. It becomes, especially in Jimmy's angry horn solo, a cinematic element, a way to symbolize emotions which the music by itself doesn't contain. Indeed, Jimmy's fellow musicians, unaware of what is going on with Francine, nod admiringly at the unexpected power of the solo. But we take little notice of the music as music. Scorsese has used it for his own purposes as surely as another director might use a prop, having the actor pick up whatever object came to hand in order to menace his wife with it. If Jimmy were brandishing a chair at Francine, we wouldn't care whether it were a Bauhaus design or Chippendale, elegant or clumsy, etc. In one way, the music functions here with almost the same indifference.

But in another way, of course, Scorsese has served the music best by serving his own art as filmmaker. He has made a lot of old music come alive by making it part of the lives of his characters. The characters in this musical are larger than the music. It is there to be expressive of them, and therefore it gains a power it would not otherwise have. It says something unique to this film alone, something the film itself makes immediate and important to us. The rightness of Jimmy's horn solo is finally just the way it epitomizes his personality. In fact, the incompatibility of Jimmy and Francine is prefigured in the film as a whole by the incompatibility of swing and be-bop.

A band singer at the end of the swing era, she is, like her music, sweet. "As sweet as she sings, that's how sweet she is," her manager tells a record producer, and it's true. It's right in style that the singer on Jimmy's gig should be doing "Honeysuckle Rose," while Francine downs all those sugar-syrup cocktails, for what she's really getting drunk on, in the face of yet another rejection by Jimmy, is her own sweetness. The trouble is that he's like his music too: hot. A be-bop musician who's still a bit ahead of his time, he gets hot under the collar at the fact that the public isn't ready for him yet. He takes it out on her, and this puts an intolerable strain on their marriage.

Two scenes after the one in the Harlem club there is a number that is the first really typical of a movie musical. It is, for one thing, the first tune that has been

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

done all the way through without interruption. The song is "But the World Goes 'Round," one of the four which John Kander and Fred Webb, composers of *Cabaret*, have done for this film, and it's sung by Francine at a recording studio. It is a continuous, long take, and a performance in the true sense of the word. While Scorsese begins the number like every other in the film, without any special staging, he gradually alters the lighting until Francine stands alone in a key light the way she might in a conventional stage or screen musical. Yet even here, what gives the song its wallop, more than any special treatment it gets, is the place it has in Francine's story. While the recording studio seems at first just another episode, the song she sings there is really a consequence of all that has gone before in the film. This is the potential Minnelli's performance of the song lives up to.

By now Scorsese can afford to indulge himself, and after Minnelli does this spectacular song, he works in a couple of full-scale production numbers. At this point he has revamped the musical sufficiently that he can trust such show-stoppers *not* to stop the show. *New York, New York* has enough momentum to keep going on its own terms no matter what.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

BOOKS

A LIFE PAID UP

GEORGE ABBOTT WHITE

Simone Weil: A Life
SIMONE PETREMENT
Pantheon, $15

Simone Weil was born in Paris in 1909 and died in Grosvenor Sanatorium just across the English Channel—Ashford, Kent—in 1943.

We have always been clear about those dates and reasonably clear about many others in her brief, searching, painful life. With her it is not so much the life as what it meant that has been so very unclear; unclear and troubling enough to have provoked over the quarter century after her death a discussion characterized by extraordinary claims and extraordinary denials, by inaccuracy, hagiography, violence, inappropriateness, and outright nonsense. And the bulk of it, when spoken aloud or actually written, has come from those Simone Weil respected least and mistrusted most, those she endlessly confronted and made uncomfortable: middle-class academics and intellectuals, especially the ones seeking or justifying power.

If in France today there are those who regard Simone Weil as "Sainte Simone" it is worth recalling that De Gaulle while in London during WWII pronounced her "mad" and likely never read the manuscript of her prophetic *Need for Roots*. Reprinting her penetrating essay "Factory Work" in *Politics* magazine immediately after that war, Dwight Macdonald also felt it necessary to editorialize in a postscript, "the remedies suggested appear as superficial as the evils previously analyzed are profound." The *Times Literary Supplement* has given each of her posthumous collections of essays, journals, and journal fragments respectful attention, yet Cambridge University's George Steiner regards her as "culty" and "perverse." One feminist journal *Soundings* is sensitive to her pivotal essay, "The *Iliad*, or, The Poem of Force," while *Ms.* headlines her as THE RED VIRGIN. Even this biography's jacket must make us aware that "she was as illuminating in her thought and in her quest for spiritual purity as she was unrelenting in her need for martyrdom."

Contradictory views, though of course all are correct. Hers *was* a body at home with ascetic detachment and discipline as well as assemblyline engagement with chaos. Hers *was* a mind at home with Greek philosophy and mathematics as well as Communist Party reversals and Hitlerian *realpolitik*. Hers *was* a spirit at home with Benedictine plainsong as well as Baptist spirituals. Simone Weil was also ridiculous, abrasive, extreme. Of course, with such sharp divisions and such striking polarities how could it be otherwise? Avoiding the divisions would be dishonest, understating the polarities would be misleading. Moreover as Elizabeth Hardwick suggests from the front page of the *N.Y. Times Book Review*, the narrative of a personality in such contradiction ("breaking intensity") can only result in a certain soft confusion; regrettably, the necessary balancing of biography must "obscure" and "blur" the exemplary (but hopelessly complicated and essentially inaccessible) life. Of course.

Fortunately for Simone Weil and for those who wish to learn a measure of what she struggled so long and so hard to learn, her second biographer refuses to accept this contemporary American, academic intellectual, tough-minded liberal, pseudo-psychoanalytic, coolly objective, notion of biography-as-balanced-contradictions. Friends and foes may persist in this spectacle. Simone Petrement, however, has had the good

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sense to present contradictions dialectically.

The results are at least fourfold. First, in spite of a silent abridgment of slightly less than half of two volumes published in Paris in 1973, Simone Weil's early, original, remarkably penetrating insights into each of our oppressive 20th century isms—colonialism, imperialism, totalitarianism, state socialism, nationalism, racism, sexism, scientism, secularism—emerge in all their intended provocativeness. Second, given a clean English translation, it is clear for those who wish to see that the meaning of her life is neither blurred nor obscured by the particular events of her life, which in Platonic fashion she herself regarded as intimations and finite though quite real all the same. The meaning is simply unbearable to accept, because accepting those insights and accepting that meaning would likely result in nothing less than our radically changing our lives. Third, one thinks of Orwell and T.E. Lawrence in England, F.O. Matthiessen and Dorothy Day in America, Silone in Italy, but almost alone among the intellectuals of her time (and our own, sad to say), Simone Weil went beyond brilliant but cerebral insights into oppression by choosing to engage the more fundamental question of injustice itself. And like them, in Camus's phrase, she "paid up personally."

Finally, when she wrote to a former lycee student in 1934

> Culture is a privilege that . . . gives power to the class that possesses it . . . let us try to undermine this privilege by relating complicated knowledge to the commonest knowledge,

she was carrying the engagement a a step further. She and those of similar privilege were not mere spectators in the vast industry of injustice. If their privilege was a self-deprivation, it was also, she now understood, "part of the problem." It was this understanding of privilege and its relation to oppression, and injustice, she would deepen and refine, insisting on it to the end of her life.

Herein lies the great value of Simone Petrement's biography. Formerly, Simone Weil's life was paraded as a series of conversion experiences: initially we have youthful involvement in studies, then Marxism-Leninism, trade unionism, pacifism, the Spanish Civil War, at end some intense but shadowy mysticism. Now the experiences are not denied, though presented dialectically, they appear less as gaudy conversions and more as impressive transmutations, less wild oscillations, more a steady progression.

To ask toward what end only highlights what Simone Petrement underlines. That is, linking Simone Weil's extensive work experiences in factory and field to her extraordinary encounters with the Catholic Church, the one having been minimized or patronizingly misunderstood, the other castigated or mystified.

On her deathbed Simone Weil would remain uncertain as to why people oppressed one another, but when she stood at her shearing machine in De-

The Church as a Ministering Community

THE 1977 LITURGICAL WEEK will bring together a great mix of people—young and older, clergy, religious, lay, men and women from a variety of Christian experiences and confessional traditions. The focus will be "The Church as a Ministering Community."

Everybody's talking about ministry, but is anybody listening to YOU?

The Week will attempt to uncover the felt needs and untapped gifts that exist in every parish, gifts that need to be exercised if the church is to be a ministering community.

There are many ministries: liturgical, social, administrative, artistic, educational, etc. We need to explore new approaches to ministry, new structures, experiments in expanded ministry, and strategies toward constituting a ministering community.

Speakers include Bernard Cooke, Emily Binns, Geoffrey Wood, and Gordon Lathrop. Gifted persons engaged in a variety of ministries will lead workshops.

The 1977 Liturgical Week is the 32nd in a series begun in 1940 under the sponsorship of The Liturgical Conference. For more program information write us at 1221 Massachusetts Avenue N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005, or call 202 393-0806.

32nd NORTH AMERICAN LITURGICAL WEEK / IOWA CITY, IOWA, AUGUST 8-11, 1977
Place: Conference Center, University of Iowa *Theme:* The Church as a Ministering Community

☐ Enclosed is my check for $50 for the entire registration fee for one person for 1977 Liturgical Week.

☐ Enclosed is a deposit of $25 for the 1977 Liturgical Week registration fee; I will pay the remaining $25 upon arrival.

☐ Please send housing information.

NOTE: The registration fee includes the entire Liturgical Week program, but does not include meals or housing. Registration fees and deposits will be refunded if notice of cancellation is received before July 15.

GROUP RATE: A group of ten or more persons from a single parish or religious organization may register for $25 per person, half the regular rate. To qualify list all names to be included on parish or organization letterhead and send a single check for the group, payable to The University of Iowa, to the address below. Make clear that you are sending a group registration for Liturgical Week. Additions and substitutions may be submitted later (to same address) on the same parish or organization letterhead. No refunds will be made for persons cancelling from groups after August 1. Group discount does not apply to meals and housing.

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

Make checks payable in U.S. dollars to: The University of Iowa. Write on check "Liturgical Week registration". Send coupon to Director of Conferences, Iowa Memorial Union, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cember 1934 it was not "experience" alone she needed, it was, as this biographer persuasively argues, because she had reached a theoretical impasse as to *how* the machine becomes a part of this world's terrible oppression. Nine months and three factories later, burns, filth, cuts, infections, fatigue (but not fear) behind her, Simone Weil knew there was a direct line of "reasoning" from our modern division and extreme specialization of labor (Taylorism) to the original separation of intellectual from manual labor Marx inveighed against when he saw it two thousand years earlier in her beloved classical Greece. "The capital fact is not the suffering but the humiliation," she wrote, agreeing with Marx that

> the liberation of the workers must be accomplished in the work itself, and that the work, in order to become that of a free man, must be pervaded by thought, invention, and judgment.

Yet disagreeing with Marx's belief in the "liberating powers of the revolution," even more with his theory of the "infinite development of the productive forces after the revolution"—as though either would uproot injustice.

Manual labor righted an experiential balance to be sure, opening Simone Weil to the absolute correctness of certain of Marx. She could not agree with him, nor could additional manual labor convince her that injustice was exterior to man, rooted in material conditions alone. It was the Church, on three memorable occasions (the Blessing of the Fleet in a poor village in Portugal, kneeling in Saint Francis's little chapel at Assisi, attending services from Palm Sunday to Easter Tuesday at Solesmes), that righted a balance on another plane; a plane that transcended the material while allowing her to see the connection between the two:

> A laborer (she wrote) burns up his own flesh and transforms it into energy like a machine burning coal. He transforms his own flesh and blood into the fruits of his labor, food and wine. . . . Manual labor is either a degrading servitude or a sacrifice.

This was the most difficult lesson of all. Learning it she knew at last what working people have known and accepted, through faith, all their lives, including the ultimate residence of injustice. Perhaps trivial to some but precious to us, this lesson. After all, as a farmwoman said,

> All the intellectuals we knew put barriers between themselves and the peasants. Simone Weil threw down these barriers and put herself on our level.

A Prince of Our Disorder: The Life of T.E. Lawrence

JOHN E. MACK

Little, Brown, $15

The Revolutionary Ascetic: Evolution of a Political Type

BRUCE MAZLISH

Basic Books, $11.95

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN

Psychobiography, a species of history which deploys psychoanalytic concepts and insights to the study of human beings (usually 'great' human beings) in culture, remains a controversial enterprise. An editorialist in the *New York Times* recently criticized the "questionable wisdom of telling it all" and lambasted the enthusiasm for private revelations on public figures, a phenomenon the *Times* correspondent regards as synonymous with pandering to the reading public's baser instincts with the express aim of titillating them and, at the same time, filling the coffers of biographers with hard cash. The *Times*' somewhat exercised commentator concluded that there was, after all, no sex in Plutarch's *Lives* yet his portraits "are among the world's more sophisticated." This surely begs the question. Plutarch did not have available for his use what the twentieth century uniquely has to offer the historian, namely, a critical depth psychology. The contemporary historic biographer must take a stand, therefore, on whether or not he considers a treatment of individual psychology an essential and constituent feature in the analysis of historic figures or an inessential and trivial dimension.

The historian who decides in favor of utilizing psychoanalytic theory faces several thorny theoretical and methodological considerations. He must, first of all, defend why he believes an appreciation of the motives and purposes of historic actors, their private wellsprings of action and emotion, is important to a compelling historic account that aims at interpreting and understanding the complex intersection of a human life with others in history.

John E. Mack's painstakingly researched, exhaustive study of the life of T.E. Lawrence stands out as exemplary: one of the finest works of the *genre*. Mack defends his enterprise with skill, elegance, and genuine modesty. His moving tale of a single man's life links the public and the private, the individual and the social, at every point; thus, *A Prince of Our Disorder* is never "reductionistic"—a charge often leveled against psychobiography. Mack is well aware that there are shifting historic contexts and circumstances outside the control and domination of any person or group of persons; that structural factors act as constraints and catalysts to political movements and to social change. But that alone cannot tell the tale. Mack recognizes that individual psychology (and thus individual intentions, motivations and purposes) operates *in* and *on* history; thus "history is often the result of individual choice and motive, and of human responsibility, both individual and collective." Given the reciprocal relationship between private motivations, fears, and fantasies and public action, a psychological understanding of an "individual 'public' figure who characteristically lives out elements of his inner life in the public arena can . . . provide yet another valuable source of information about the psychology of action."

Lawrence is a perfect subject for the sensitive psychobiographer. A deeply moral, troubled, introspective man of genius, he left behind a vast record of achievement and failure.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mack accords Lawrence sympathetic understanding and respect but not uncritical adulation. He considers Lawrence a paradigmatic example of the "enabler," the person who enables others to see possibilities they would not otherwise have seen and to dare deeds they would not otherwise have dared. The highly personal mode of leadership assumed by Lawrence towards those he "enabled" contains within it, Mack argues, a critique of traditional styles of military leadership and modes of heroism linked to an easy justification of killing and violence. Mack argues convincingly that Lawrence's heroism, coupled as it was with critical self-restraint, a unique capacity to empathize with others, and an inability to justify killing with facile appeals to the "national interest" provide us with a model of the anguished (because self-aware and critical) contemporary hero, the "man with a load on his mind."

Bruce Mazlish's *The Revolutionary Ascetic* is a less successful book than Mack's *Lawrence*. There are several reasons why this is so and a comparison of the two books points to weaknesses in Mazlish's approach. One strength of Mack's study is its meticulous grounding in the rich particularity of a single life lived in a historic time and place, enmeshed in a dense web of social relationships. Mack moves from the particular to the universal carefully, defending each step along the way, and thus never loses

DEATH AND THERAPY

JOHN GARVEY

A few people I know say they are actually looking forward to death. They feel sure that it will be wonderful, presumably because their faith presents them with a belief in an afterlife which is much better than this life, or because their current existence is miserable enough to make death seem a relief, whatever it involves. I know others who fear death because they think of it (not, after all, unreasonably) as the end, obliteration.

I must be somewhere in between. My hope is confined to John the Evangelist's statement that "what we shall be hereafter has not been made known as yet. But we know that when he comes we shall be like him; we shall see him, then, as he is." I have that hope, and have no idea what dying will be like. I have a hunch that it will not involve the survival of whatever it is I think of as myself, and that my "self-image" (to use the current happy jargon) will be among the first things to flicker away. It hardly survives a good night's sleep at this point, and it seems foolhardy to suppose that death will be easier.

I mention this because of all the books published during the past few years which have hauled death out of the closet, but in the process felt the need to dress death up a little, put him in a leisure suit or a doctor's white coat. There has been an avalanche of death books, some of them very good. On the whole the trend has been healthier than the mentality which prevailed for years, and still hangs on in those doctors and relatives who refuse to tell dying patients the truth about this most important moment of their lives. Who can object to making death a permissible word? Better than speaking of people who "pass," like kidney stones, "from this world to the next."

Ernest Becker's *The Denial of Death* (Free Press/Macmillan, $2.95) is one of the good death books. It has been widely reviewed, and Becker's belief that virtually every human activity is a response to our continual need to evade the fact of dying is an important one, to say the least. A more recent book, more limited in focus than Becker but essential for anyone interested in the ethical implications of the new awareness of death and dying, is Robert M. Veatch's *Death, Dying, and The Biological Revolution* (Yale, $12.95). Veatch handles a number of extremely difficult questions with extraordinary sensitivity, and his chapters on the choice not to prolong dying and the right to refuse treatment are especially strong. In addition, he deals with such issues as the pros and cons of the "living will," legal definitions of death, the responsibility of doctors, the rights of patients, and public policy considerations. Veatch has some important criticisms of the "death with dignity" movement, which, as he points out, might involve a contradiction in terms; at the same time, he will not make anti-euthanasia fundamentalists happy. Veatch's book is subtitled "Our Last Quest for Responsibility," and it is hard to imagine a more responsible treatment.

I am afraid that the same thing cannot be said about the books produced by the Elizabeth Kübler-Ross school; it *is* beginning to be a school, even having its form of the old *imprimatur*—in this case, approval in the form of an introduction or recommendation by Dr. Kübler-Ross.

I don't want to make light of what is in many ways an important achievement. Dr. Kübler-Ross's *On Death and Dying* (Macmillan, $2.45) is one of those breakthrough books, the kind of writing which makes a major difference in the ordinary regard people have for a common but mysterious thing, which death certainly is. *On Death and Dying* grew from Dr. Kübler-Ross's experience with dying people, who were asked to speak freely about what they were going through, and her detailing of the stages of the dying person's response to impending death has since become classic. So much of her approach is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sight of his subject. Mazlish, however, does the opposite. He begins with a schematic, inadequately developed global "ideal type," the revolutionary ascetic, and then proceeds to "plug in" particular revolutionaries like Cromwell, Robespierre, Lenin and Mao. Mazlish's psychological evidence and account of the lives of his revolutionaries relies heavily on secondary sources and is anecdotal and nonspecific. The book has all the earmarks of a rushed job. Mazlish's analysis fails to be as compelling as it might in part because he has molded his "evidence" too neatly into his three-part model of the revolutionary ascetic, a model he claims to derive from a rather mechanical "synthesis" of Max Weber and Sigmund Freud.

The problem is not that Mazlish is wrong that revolutionary ascetics are individuals who have "displaced libido" onto such abstract ideals as humanity, The Revolution, or The Rights of Man, and are therefore incapable of loving "real" people, including their own families; who therefore reject their social ties and their own pasts and thereby come to represent to others a new "ego ideal." This may all be true. But the rather breezy casualness of Mazlish's analysis, capped by a concluding chapter that poses a series of superficial historic "ifs" in ten dizzying pages, is neither convincing nor even particularly interesting. Mack's *A Prince of Our Disorder* and Mazlish's own earlier work on James and John Stuart Mill embody the prodigious labors of many years. It is that kind of care alone, not unlike the organic

valuable and moving that you feel almost ogre-ish saying anything bad about it, especially because it is fast becoming an orthodoxy, one which travels under absolutely humane auspices (who can possibly object to making death easier?)—but there are problems with it, as with any orthodoxy, and as with any orthodoxy they come down to problems with structure and doctrine.

To take the problem of structure first: the interviews in *On Death and Dying* occurred in the context of a seminar in which dying patients were invited to talk to theology students, for the benefit of the latter. The dying people were there to teach people who tend to talk about death far too easily. So far, so good (but I begin to see the hand of Woody Allen when Dr. Kübler-Ross reassures us that "one of our patients had died during an interview"). The author's statement that the dying people were teachers isn't entirely false, but like the statement that teachers learn from their students, it isn't entirely true either. There were presuppositions hanging around the idea from the start, one of them being that death can be dealt with, and that the proper dealing-with depends upon a proper attitude and therefore with proper people.

In other words, with professionals, or with people whose professional training makes them professionally sensitive. Ivan Illich has had a lot of good things to say about the dangers of professionalism, especially the sort which attends the most basic and sacred moments of birth and death. Illich has told the story of a panicky attendant at a birth who tried to push the head of a baby being born back into the mother—the objection being that the baby could not be born until the doctor arrived, until the professional presence validated the moment of birth.

Could dying become similarly institutionalized? This has been seriously recommended. Not that Dr. Kübler-Ross is pushing this notion. In fact at the beginning of *On Death and Dying* she speaks of the death of a farmer in his own home, with his family and friends nearby, in a completely healthy, non-professional manner: this is a good death, she says, and rightly. But her thought and her method have contributed to the possibility of professionalizing death. In the theology seminar the death professionals are already potentially present, ready to tell us how to feel, and when to. The doctrine is found in seedling form in the last chapter of *On Death and Dying:* "Watching the peaceful death of a human being reminds us of a falling star; one of the million lights in a vast sky that flares up for a brief moment only to disappear into the endless night forever." That "us" sounds like the papal "we." I wonder whether there isn't too much generalizing here. What about the particular person, or the unpeaceful death? "A human being" doesn't die, but I, or you. The conclusion to *On Death and Dying,* in most ways a very decent book, is dreadfully sentimental.

This sentimentality is not accidental; it is in fact basic to the doctrine being born here, a doctrine which shows up again in *Death: The Final Stage of Growth,* a title which looks for the silver lining if ever a title did; and the doctrine extends itself dramatically in *Life After Life. Death: The Final Stage of Growth* (Prentice-Hall, $2.95) was edited by Dr. Kübler-Ross and includes several good essays on the institutional, religious, and psychological aspects of dying. But in the end we are told, "There is no need to be afraid of death. It is not the end of the physical body which should worry us. . . . Death is the final stage of growth in this life. There is no total death. Only the body dies. The self or spirit, or whatever you may wish to label it, is eternal. You may interpret this in any way which makes you comfortable."

This is reassuring only as long as all you need is reassurance. But is my comfort the sole thing at issue? What about the truth? We have to accept the *a priori* statements of the authors that the self is eternal, and so forth, and that for this reason there is no need to fear.

Here the Kübler-Ross school claims

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to find evidence, or at least strong hints. In *Life After Life* (Bantam, $1.95) Raymond Moody, M.D., summarizes the experiences of approximately 150 people who either died (in the sense that their hearts stopped beating) or came very close to death. Almost without exception they found the experience reassuring, and time and time again they speak of such things as a "being of light" who is there as a beneficent presence, along with dead friends and relatives who welcome them. In addition, they have "out of the body" experiences in which a kind of non-corporeal duplicate of the meatier self hovers over the deathbed scene.

The method of Moody's book is extremely vague, a fact which is defended on the grounds that we are still cautiously making our way into this realm. Not that there is anything deceptive or false about Moody, but what he has found—or at least his interpretation of his findings—makes him credulous at times, as he is, for example, in discussing the later stages of death described in the Tibetan Book of the Dead, "which none of my subjects has gone so far as to experience." I have reservations about calling someone whose heart has stopped and then started again dead, in any meaningful sense, and the fact that none of these subjects experienced brain death (which is increasingly the clinically accepted standard) is certainly important. If they had, of course, they could not have come back to tell the tale—but this is part of my point. Certainly more research will be done in this area, and it might be reassuring to some people to know that a peaceful death may not be as dreadful as they thought; perhaps oxygen deprivation or the closing down of brain cells explains some of these things. I don't know (and I don't think anyone does), but in any case no strong conclusions can be drawn from Moody's book, which comes with a blurb from Richard Bach of Jonathan Livingston Seagull fame, and a foreword by Elizabeth Kübler-Ross.

Dr. Kübler-Ross hails *Life After Life* as a "courageous" book, and braces Moody to prepare for criticism from clergy, who will, she says, resent his explorations into a subject which they believe to be taboo, and from scientists who will call his work "unscientific." Well, as presented here it is in fact unscientific, and as to clerical dissent I can only say that most of the people who have recommended Moody's book to me (as well as her own work) are priests, nuns, and ministers, who find this kind of writing reassuring.

I don't. My reasons are mixed. One is that these books simply do not make death less mysterious or frightening to me. Death still is the ultimate helplessness, the thing before which we are absolutely powerless. One can and should prepare for death, and its constant reminder that we are contingent beings is necessary to any wisdom. But attempts at reassurance are something else again, and could lead us to believe that we can somehow control our deaths. At least this is one danger.

My other criticism is an esthetic one. The accounts of death here sound, frankly, a little corny and disappointing, like the grey world described by spiritualists who speak confidently of "the other side." It is as if you die and find, not heaven, but Peoria. Part of me is agnostic about what happens at death, but another part hopes at least for something more interesting than this. Even MGM could do it better.

Finally, I suppose the thanatology craze bothers me for the same reason a lot of pop psychology does. It takes questions which have moved philosophers, poets, and prophets to real depths, and reduces them all to questions of therapy. The Buddha and Socrates and Jesus all saw something deeply significant in the dread we have of death. Would the Socrates of *Crito* find it reassuring to be told about the "being of light"? Jesus's weeping at Lazarus's death and his dread at Gethsemane have more to do with what death is and will remain for human beings than the less than honest counsel to "interpret this in any way that makes you comfortable." It is a long way downhill, morally and intellectually, from *Crito* to this.

unfolding of an analysis, which produces psychobiographies that genuinely enhance our understanding of human lives in history.

The Thorn Birds

COLLEEN McCULLOUGH

Harper & Row, $9.95

STEVEN KROLL

By now almost everyone will have heard of *The Thorn Birds*. How Colleen McCullough wrote it at the rate of fifteen thousand words a night, once did thirty thousand in a sitting, finally produced a manuscript of a thousand pages weighing ten pounds. How the decision-makers at Harper & Row—the trade chief, the marketing director, the subsidiary rights director—took the manuscript home for the weekend and realized they had to go all out. How the Literary Guild snapped it up as their June selection and, in an incredible auction among paperback publishers, Avon Books paid a record-setting $1.9 million for the paperback reprint rights.

All of this is enough to send any aspiring writer straight to the typewriter. It's particularly interesting because the author is unknown—she's published one earlier novel, *Tim*, that didn't sell—and because both she and her book are Australian. Up until now, selling fiction about Australia in America has been like trying to sell chocolate cake for breakfast. There have been the Patrick Whites, the Thomas Keneallys, the Sumner Locke

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Elliotts, but even when they've been appreciated critically, the books have not begun to sell big. Now, with *The Thorn Birds* approaching major best-sellerdom, the worm has turned.

But what of this fat family saga, this tale of tribulation on a huge sheep station in the Australian outback between 1915 and 1969, this giant novel called *The Thorn Birds?* Does it really merit all this attention and money? Does it really measure up? The answer, unfortunately, is no.

Which is not to say that the book is a total failure. It has a romantic view of the world that is often quite touching. The prose has a fullness about it, and a density of detail, that sometimes overwhelms. There is the title metaphor of the thorn birds, of the bird that, from its first breath, searches for a thorn tree, impales itself upon the sharpest spine, and dying, "rises above its own agony to out-carol the lark and the nightingale. One superlative song, existence the price." Best of all there is the feeling for the land, and for the Australian landscape. When the Cleary family arrives from New Zealand, on their way to the sheep station Drogheda, this is what they see: "It was all brown and grey, even the trees! The winter wheat was already turned a fawnish silver by the glaring sun, miles upon miles of it rippling and bending in the wind, broken only by strands of thin, spindling, blue-leafed trees and dusty clumps of tired grey bushes. . . ."

But even the descriptions of the land tend to go on too long too often, and to break down into lists. And at Drogheda the endless Wet and Dry periods (one drought lasts almost ten years) become monotonous in the extreme.

Going on too long too often, becoming monotonous and slack, not creating dramatic peaks or valleys, these are the book's principal failings. When Frank, the eldest son, confronts the father who is not his, when Paddy, that father, dies in a fire on Drogheda, when Father Ralph de Bricassart breaks his vows and finally makes love to Meggie, the only Cleary daughter among many sons, there are only slight ripples in the surface of the narrative. And then there is all the information given, then repeated, then repeated again. Whatever the words may say, the tension is missing from them and from the action.

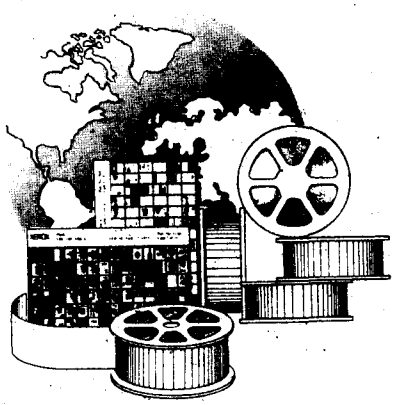
Perhaps it has something to do with Ms. McCullough's inability to recognize what might have been sharpened and what left out. Her overall structure is sound; it's the scenes within that suffer and produce the yawns. And then there is the question of the material. Tara, after all, has more built-in drama than a two-story yellow sandhouse surrounded by gardens, dust, and flies. And the Civil War and the burning of Atlanta are going, quite naturally, to be more sensational than years of drought and a fire spreading over acres of bare land.

But not necessarily. Not if the characters are strong enough. In Meggie Cleary and Father Ralph de Bricassart, Colleen McCullough had the chance to create characters of real substance and she did not. Only the shadows of what might been are there.

When Paddy's mean-spirited older sister, Mary Carson, invites him to Drogheda to be her head stockman and eventual heir, Meggie is ten years old, with fascinating gray eyes and red-gold hair. Handsome, young, Father Ralph—in exile for insulting his bishop—is the district priest, and he falls in love with her the moment he sees her. All through Meggie's childhood their love continues to grow. When Mary Carson leaves her fortune and Drogheda to the Church to further Ralph's career and Paddy agrees to stay on as manager instead of owner and Ralph leaves the area to fuel his ambition, the love remains. When Meggie marries a stockman for his gall and moves to North Queensland to work as a household maid while her husband cuts sugar cane, Ralph must seek her out.

Of course the love is thwarted. Ralph will never abandon his ambition, never leave the Church—and will eventually become a cardinal. But at least there

commonweal...



is Available in MICROFORM

For Complete Information WRITE :

University Microfilms International

Dept. F.A.
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48106
U.S.A.

Dept. F.A.
18 Bedford Row
London, WC1R 4EJ
England

REVIEWERS

JOHN GARVEY, an editor with Templegate, just published *Saints for Confused Times* (Thomas More Press).

GEORGE ABBOTT WHITE was a Visiting Lecturer at MIT in 1975 where he organized a lecture series and seminar on Simone Weil. He recently edited those lectures and is now writing a biography of F. O. Matthiessen.

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN is a political theorist who has studied at the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute.

STEVEN KROLL is a New York writer and critic presently working on a novel.

FATHER KEVIN G. O'CONNELL, S.J., is on the faculty at Weston School of Theology in Massachusetts where he specializes in the Old Testament.

JAMES F. MCCUE teaches at the School of Religion, University of Iowa.

FATHER RAYMOND A. SCHROTH, S.J., is associate editor of *Commonweal.*

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS, pastor of the Lutheran Church of St. John the Evangelist, is the author of *Time Toward Home: The American Experiment as Revelation.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is a brief affair on Matlock Island, and Meggie comes away with the only part of Ralph she can ever hope to have: his child.

How extraordinary these two could have been. Ralph could have joined that group of distinguished fictional priests, from Father Zossima in *The Brothers Karamazov* through Father Urban in J.F. Powers' *Morte D'Urban,* but we learn virtually nothing about him beyond his endless frustration and his Norman and Irish ancestry. And Meggie's only real importance seems to lie in her ability to survive.

With all its scope and shifting scenery—from New Zealand and Australia to Rome and London—*The Thorn Birds* lacks any real dimension.

Ministry to Word and Sacraments: History and Theology

BERNARD COOKE

Fortress, $25

Ministry and Imagination

URBAN T. HOLMES, III

Seabury, $10.95

KEVIN G. O'CONNELL

Although these two works on ministry are very different in conception and format, they share a concern to free ministry in the modern church from patterns of thought and practice that limit the church's growth or distort its nature.

Bernard Cooke's *magnum opus* is a formidable challenge to read and almost impossible to summarize or critique adequately in this brief compass. Its encyclopedia-style format (677 large, double-columned pages) allows a certain leisurely breadth to the exposition. There are five major parts: "Ministry as Formation of Community"; "Ministry to God's Word"; "Service to the People of God"; "Ministering to God's Judgment" and "Ministry to the Church's Sacramentality." Although interconnected to some degree, each part could serve equally well as a separate monograph. Each joins a series of historical discussions on the New Testament evidence and the Ante-Nicene, Patristic, Medieval, Reformation and Modern church developments (separate chapters in all but part three, where the five periods are combined into three chapters) with a complementary chapter of theological reflections on the particular topic.

One of Cooke's theses is that teaching authority and jurisdiction within the community have been improperly and harmfully brought together in the office of bishop and pope. He argues strongly that the "power of jurisdiction," while proper to human society because it is not a community freely chosen by its members, has no place in the free society that is the church. Members of the Christian community "cannot be forced to believe, nor to live out the implications of that belief; the totality of their Christian activity, individual or corporate, is rooted in their own free decision. . . . It appears, then, that there is no role for jurisdiction in the Christian community. Some profit may come from the formulation of laws, but strictly speaking this would be a teaching function that provided guidance for Christians' prudential judgments rather than real legislation." (p. 518)

While affirming that the episcopacy as a group has a teaching authority deriving from "a privileged collegial witness" and that the bishop of Rome has "a special normative resonance with the orthodox faith of this episcopal college," Cooke insists that there seems to be no justification for grounding the truth of any statement made by pope or bishop in ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The corporate charism of apostolic witness "has its own special authority in the church's life of faith; but this witness functions as truth to shape men's consciousness and not as positive law to control their behavior." When pope or bishops go beyond the expression of their collegial witness and "engage in other teaching or theological reflection or prudential judging, their authority is as great as their understanding and *no special weight attaches to their teaching because of official position.*" (p. 519, emphasis added.)

This is strong stuff, and is reinforced over and over again, not merely in the theological reflection sections, but in the historical chapters as well. It is not only in matters of teaching authority that the concept of jurisdictional authority is questioned by Cooke, but also in regard to sacramental absolution and the witnessing of marriages. Both theologian and priest should be encouraged to exercise their ministries with responsible freedom, answerable to the community and its leaders, but without the structure of jurisdictional authority to contend with.

There is no space to discuss here in detail Cooke's treatment of ministerial priesthood as a developing concept over the centuries, but he sees the notion of jurisdiction, the progressive hierarchizing of ecclesiastical structures and the growing emphasis on proper ritual as all making their contribution. He calls for a re-appropriation of the understanding that Jesus' priestly orientation "is accomplished essentially by his being the sacrament of his Father's self-gift to men and the sacrament of men's acceptance and reciprocal self-gift." (p. 640) The priesthood of the entire Christian community is "the fundamental dynamism and purposefulness of its being" (p. 640) and finds expression in all it is and does. And therefore, "everything about the church—all its activities, all its institutions, all its ministries, all its members—are marked with a priestly character; but no one aspect or agency of the church can claim to be the priesthood." (p. 641) The ministry of liturgical leadership has a special relationship to the community's priesthood, bringing it to its fullest sacramental expression, and is required by the church's sacramental nature. But its precise form is not to be given preeminence over against the community nor is it to be made the norm against which other ministries are to be measured.

While Cooke's historical chapters are followed by relatively extensive

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sets of notes, the theological chapters have only brief selected bibliographies. A fairly long introduction gives some semblance of unity to the entire work, but the lack of any concluding summary left me with a feeling of disunity at the end. Also, because the historical chapters in the successive parts inevitably go over the same ground from perspectives that are only partially new, I found a sense of tedium arising at times. Within chapters, boldface and italicized headings appear interchangeable, and often a heading refers only to the first of several items coming before the next heading. This makes it difficult to outline the chapters or even to grasp their development on a first reading.

In a detailed and comprehensive way, Cooke's treatise is a call to the church to let go of many structures that have proven inadequate or harmful, and to embark anew on the venture of being Christ to the world. Urban T. Holmes's book is a different piece of work, drawing extensively on many modern authors from a variety of disciplines, but also issuing a challenge to the church and its ministers to let ministry develop anew or more effectively the role of bridge between structure and anti-structure, between the order of the city and the chaos where the frightening otherness of God confronts us and challenges us to new growth.

The book has three parts: "The Context of Ministry" (with chapters on the City, the Meaning, and the Mystery); "Toward a Contemporary Piety" (with chapters on He Who Images, the Place of Imaging, Dying to Image, and Image and Story); and "Patterns in Ministry" (with chapters on the Congregation, the Priest, and the World). Because I had agreed to do this composite review, I found myself reading Holmes right after finishing Cooke, and the juxtaposition was a happy one. From one perspective after another, Holmes puts flesh on the challenges to new creativity and risk that were implicit in Cooke's extensive analyses.

For Holmes, the God we hope to follow is easily lost from view when we settle comfortably into the structures of life in the church and in the world. We forget that "the content of faith is love, and it is this that grounds the belief of man in God and in his relation to him." (p. 74) He contrasts *faith*, one's open expectancy toward God, with *belief*, the substance of what one understands to be the meaning of that relationship.

The experience of God and the transformation of consciousness cannot be an individualistic affair, but must lead to creative action in the world. There is a dialectic movement between the structured world and the structured church, on the one side, and the "outside," the unstructured, on the other. Both sides of our brain, the rational and the intuitive, must be given room to develop. Control is necessary for human life, but we also need to open the door to the imagination with its ambiguity and risk, or there is no place for God in our life. "It is the sense of identity, handed down through time . . ., which gives us the imagery and the security to think the new." (p. 103)

> *". . . it does seem that 'tradition' and allied notions such as 'apostolic succession' must relate most basically to the Christian community as a whole. Certain agencies, for example, the episcopacy, may have a specific function relative to the preservation, development, and transmission of Christian faith; however, the process of tradition is not confined to any such agency (or group of agencies) but rather involves the complementary activity of the entire church."*
>
> —*Cooke,* Ministry to Word and Sacraments

Social structures are good and necessary, but they also make the ministry of the transcendent very difficult. And so they have to be left behind somehow on one's spiritual journey, not to be abandoned, but to be re-entered after we have been freed to imagine and to meet the uncontrollable. "It is only when the self does not demand self-understanding in the name of control and predictability, but is willing to admit the mystery of its own being and surrender itself to this mystery, that God is able to be seen." (p. 140)

Even the stories we tell are often used as means of control, rather than as ways of opening ourselves to the new. Both in our personal lives and in the life of the community, there needs to be both continuity and change, conservatism and innovation, formality and intimacy, discipline and freedom. The role of the priest is to serve this dialectic, and in particular to experience and enable others to experience the wilderness outside our control.

Holmes uses the images of "mana-person," clown, storyteller, and wagon master to give meaning to this role. "There is more than just a bit of the maverick in the wagon master. Some of that intangible reward of the arduous journey is that he gets away from the expectations laid upon him by the city life. He is not marching to that 'drum.' He is not in a hurry and he reads the signs. He is good at creative time-wasting." (p. 239) Throughout Holmes's book, there are repeated efforts to bring alive the creative dimension of Christian life and ministry. I found this a stimulating book, easier to manage than Cooke's volume, but equally interesting and complementary.

Within the context of modern pressures on the constricting structures of church authority, Cooke's historical studies lead him to deny the value and the validity of episcopal governance as it is now exercised in the Roman church. He overstates his case at times, and his theological reflections have exercised some influence on the supposedly prior historical investigations, but his challenge cannot go unheard. To what extent has the historically conditioned role of episcopal authority (and papal authority) been accorded an absoluteness that is now detrimental to Christian life? And how can the church, all of us, move toward a more

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

helpfully Christian form of church life in the present and for the future?

Holmes's work is less imposing, but no less challenging. He easily accepts the need for structure in church life and in the ministry, but insists that the proper role of the minister is not just to maintain structures, but also to go outside them and to lead the community outside them, so that the God who is not confined to any structure can be encountered where he is most likely to meet us. This is not a rejection of structures for Holmes, but a pilgrimage that allows us to return to the familiar structures without being imprisoned by them.

In their different ways, both authors confront the church with the need to foster a ministry that is less controlled and more ready to listen to God than to human authorities. Can we take that risk? Dare we not take it?

IN BRIEF

TOWARD A HUMAN WORLD ORDER: BEYOND THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRAITJACKET, *by Gerald and Patricia Mische, Paulist Press,* $9.95.

The thesis of this book could almost be inferred from its title: all the major problems confronting us are rendered unmanageable by the world system of sovereign nation-states. The authors attempt first to show that this is the case, and then they try to indicate how that system can be left behind and a more human future opened up. The work has much in common with some other world order literature, perhaps especially with the work of Richard Falk and the World Order Models Project. Its special features are two: the special stress put on the "national security straitjacket" as the principal cause of all the ills that beset us, and a lengthy and valuable analysis of the importance of the religious dimensions and religious communities for the creation of a human world order.

Though the book contains many useful insights, it is weak in three respects. The unrelenting emphasis on the sovereign-state system is at times unconvincing and leads to the conclusion that nothing of significance is possible this side of a "global juridical order" —i.e., effective world government. Secondly, the book fails to take a hard look at what would be the necessary features of such an order; it does not ask under what conditions the U.S.A. and the USSR might be expected to turn over to it military sovereignty. Thirdly, the book assumes that great numbers of people want a "just world order," and are impeded in achieving this by the "national security straitjackets." The book does not confront the possibility that an unjust world order may be in the "interests" of large numbers of people, and that national sovereignty may be a means for asserting those interests.

JAMES F. MCCUE

ON BECOMING A COUNSELOR: A BASIC GUIDE FOR NON-PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS, *by Eugene Kennedy, Seabury, $12.95.*

Within the course of a year, every conscientious priest, teacher, lawyer—or friend—who may not be a trained psychologist will confront a good many of the wounded persons in this extremely valuable book: the passive-aggressive faculty member who always comes late to meetings and suddenly votes against a motion he had once supported; the resistant client who laughs at everything or throws up a screen of intellectual talk between himself and the counselor; the depressed woman on the edge of suicide; the seductive hysteric who entertains the therapist with highly colored accounts of experiences which may not have occurred; the antisocial personality who cons the unwary priest with promises of reform; the paranoid who literally reeks of mistrust—who may be fascinated by ESP and mysticism—who has set his sights on a target whose reputation he is determined to destroy; the student who has just lost a parent or who himself is about to die.

Grappling with these problems—especially when he is doing so in his spare time—even a good non-professional counselor will make mistakes. He may talk too much, try to "cheer up" the depressed person or the mourner rather than deal with his feelings. He may waste time in small talk, be indefinite in planning appointments, allow a hostile client to threaten him and manipulate his emotions. He may just be ignorant: of the effects of certain drugs, the symptoms of schizophrenia, of the symbolic language suffering people use to get through to us when they cannot find the words, of his own limitations as a sympathetic person.

Father Kennedy's guide is meant to rescue us from this ignorance and these mistakes, and to make us realize—through study and an awareness of our own emotional responses—what we can and cannot do when people come to us for help. He is preparing a second volume on sexual problems. If it is as thorough, practical, sensitive and balanced at this one it cannot come soon enough.

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

THEOLOGICAL MODELS FOR THE PARISH, *by Sabbas J. Kilian, OFM, Alba House, $5.95.*

Kilian, who teaches at Fordham University, offers a helpful survey of Roman Catholic thought in this century with respect to both the theological status and the forms of the parish community. Although a brief gesture is made toward the larger historical context, Kilian clearly believes the 20th Century is the time of most creative experimentation toward bringing ecclesiological theory into closer accord with the social reality of the eucharistic community. He offers ample documentation of what has been tried and is being tried in Europe and the Americas. The argument is frequently disjointed, excessively studded by citations, and lamentably devoid of ecumenical perspective. Nonetheless, Kilian conveys a sense of informed excitement that should give pause to those who have prematurely declared the parish dead.

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

(*Continued from page 451*)

political controversy in our nation. Continued naiveté, feigned or innocent, promises not greater understanding but only a willed oblivion.

GARY MITCHELL

Reply

Mr. Mitchell and I are very far apart. He thinks the murder of John F. Kennedy is a mystery with an answer, a clear and simple explanation which would tie together all or most of the evidence contradicting the Warren Commission Report, the sort of answer which might be written down on a piece of paper and hidden in a safe. An answer such as, "Castro did it" or "the Mafia did it" or "a disgruntled group of low-level CIA intelligence officers did it." The suggested solutions are endless. I think the evidence for these conjectures is thin and circumstantial in the extreme; Mr. Mitchell thinks it's thick and germane.

But what separates us is not so much our evaluation of the evidence, as my feeling that doubts about the Oswald-alone theory amount to a pathological social condition. Mr. Mitchell feels the United States "may have gone the way of a 'banana republic' " by which I take him to mean that Kennedy was killed by a group of people—"the Mafia," "the CIA," "right-wing Texas oilmen"—who are in secret control of the country. It's hard to read his statement in any other way. I do not think our national destiny is in the hands of a secret cabal. It may not work quite as described in sixth-grade American history textbooks, but the dominant interests—the military-industrial complex, organized labor, the automobile and oil industries, the Jewish organizations which support Israel, the cotton-growers, etc. etc.—are apparent enough to anyone with the time to pay attention. The belief that such interest groups are only a sort of screen, that some secret group is manipulating all of them behind the scenes, strikes me as pathological.

Not all conspiracy theorists go to this melodramatic extreme, of course, although they tend to believe that some secret group is hiding the truth. The theories, of which there are a great many, most of them contradictory, are based for the most part on apparent discrepancies (Oswald did not distinguish himself as a marksman in the Marines, so how did he manage to hit Kennedy? etc. etc.) or unsubstantiated reports (Ruby met Castro in Havana three weeks before the assassination, etc. etc.). I don't know how to explain these things away, nor do I think most of them are by nature neatly explicable. When I was ten years old I once hit a blue tack at 75 feet with a .22 cal. rifle. I've never been able to do anything of the sort since. Maybe Oswald got lucky, just as I did. I don't know, nor do I ever expect to know.

It's hard to take this position without sounding feckless, which is probably what makes Mr. Mitchell so mad. But the world is filled with unexplained mysteries. Jimmy Carter says he once saw a UFO. Some Boston scientists think they've taken a picture of the Loch Ness Monster. Trappers in the Northwest claim to have been abducted by Big Foot. Mountain climbers in the Himalayas say they've heard the Abominable Snowman howling about their tent at night, and found his footprints in the morning. I can't explain any of these reports, or hundreds of others like them, but I do not conclude as a result that the case is proved, or even that the question is truly open. I don't believe in Big Foot, the Loch Ness Monster, the Abominable Snowman, the tatzlewurm of the Alps, giant sloths in Argentina, giant Auks in New Zealand, 60-foot anacondas and two-ton armadillos in the Amazon, marsupial cats in Tasmania, the Bermuda Triangle, the Flying Dutchman, Flying Saucers, Atlantis, the curse of Tutankhamen, the children of Mu, the crash of a spaceship in Siberia in 1907, terrestrial visits by astronauts in Biblical times, or mermaids. I can't explain away the evidence for all of these things, any more than I can explain all the evidence which seems to contradict the Warren Report, and I confess I'm not inclined to try. It's not that I don't care about the truth, but the fact that I think the Oswald-alone theory *is the truth*, and that evidence to the contrary can never be explained to the satisfaction of those convinced there is some other hidden answer, locked away. As I suggested in my article, what separates me from Mr. Mitchell and other conspiracy theorists, is, more than anything else, a matter of tempermanent.

THOMAS POWERS

Distorting the Truth

Narberth, Pa.

To the Editors: Rev. C.J. McNaspy, S.J., takes David P. Chandler to task [May 27] for not having read François Ponchaud's "carefully researched" book on Cambodia, citing Ponchaud's alleged claim that the Khmer Rouge leadership has "boasted" of having eliminated in one year a quarter of their own population. It is obvious that McNaspy has not read Ponchaud's book, but relies on Lacouture on both the carefulness of the research and the alleged boast. This is clear from the fact that neither the boast nor the claim of "elimination" are to be found anywhere in Ponchaud—they are purely a concoction of Lacouture, who acknowledges this in his "corrections" (*New York Review*, May 26). Ponchaud's book, while no great shakes as research, is deserving of attention—including his extensive discussion of the tremendous devastation wrought by the U.S. and its critical catalytic role in bringing on a horrendous civil conflict. The interesting thing is how Lacouture's distortions have pushed a falsified version of Ponchaud into mass media stardom. Also interesting is the fact that a large and respectable literature claiming that Khmer Rouge atrocities are being systematically created and inflated is completely disregarded by the mass media, all closely analogous to Vietnamese atrocities, 1963-73. This overall American experience shows that the will to believe

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Communist evil, and the underlying interests that find anti-Communism useful, can establish a "line" and distort the truth as effectively as any system of censorship.

EDWARD S. HERMAN

Marriage Rites

Kansas City, Mo.

To the Editors: My admiration for Msgr. Steve Kelleher is from long-standing personal and professional association. I salute his beautiful compassion for the people described in his article "Catholic Annulments: A Dehumanizing Process" [June 10]. Generally, as well, I would cringe from attempting to compete with his canonical-procedural understanding of marriage cases. His article reveals some presuppositions, however, and here my friend Steve and I may have serious disagreements. May I give my own suppositions to explain.

Let's *suppose* that the Sacrament of Matrimony is a specifically different thing from simply "marriage." I appeal to both the latest and best theology on that subject contained in *Gaudium et Spes* of Vatican II (para. 48-52) describing the qualities and thus the uniqueness of marriage which is Sacrament. Let's *suppose* further that the Church's particular task is to call those to be married to Sacrament; to prepare their minds and hearts (wills) to that precise state of life that is saving to one another. Finally, let's *suppose* that we who are doing the calling somewhat understand and are somewhat apt in our abilities to explain the qualities, values and obligations of that sacred state and that people both can and do dispose themselves to the Sacrament of Matrimony. From these suppositions there are a number of things in Monsignor's article which I must reject.

I do not believe that the Church should be out of the "annulment business" since that is simply the terminology which describes the manner in which the Church declares that a Sacrament never existed. As we are provided a way of liturgically affirming a Sacrament's expression by the marriage ceremony, we are likewise provided with a way of declaring that a Sacrament was never effected though ostensibly one might have thought so. If Monsignor were simply arguing that our tactics for making such a declaration need radical amendment—especially to include compassion of a Kelleher kind—then who could disagree? But to conclude that the procedure should be abandoned (whether by the name "annulment" or some other), is to suggest that every ostensible sign is undeniably effective. Every ceremony *makes* the Sacrament therefore, there being no way to deny the effect. I would have serious problems of accepting that automated form of sacramental theology.

In those Tribunal decisions which touch a spouse's incapacity, it is no doubt important that we confine ourselves to the question of capacity for *Sacrament*! We are called upon to make similar judgments about children's First Penance and First Eucharist, their capacity to understand the significance of what is taking place even if in elementary terms. One may well be totally indisposed, mentally or volitionally, for the *Sacrament* of Matrimony though quite capable of "marriage" by some other non-Sacramental definition. I have a conviction I would prefer to maintain that, for instance, what is being consented to in a typical ceremony of marriage in the Judge's chambers on most any Saturday is not in species the same thing being consented to or witnessed at the local Catholic church on the next street.

Denying people the "natural right" to marry is certainly NOT the Church's business; but affirming who is and who is not capable of the Sacrament of Matrimony is *precisely* the Church's business. Carrying the "natural right to marry" to the point of including marrying anyone one wishes to marry, as they want, for as long as they want may well be "marriage" as contemporary culture understands it, but in total conflict with the values that belong to "Sacrament of Matrimony."

By this time in our history of Church renewal, no serious Canon Lawyer I know would deny that our execution of law will not be valid or of value until it is in harmony with sound theology. What we must first understand, and better, is the nature of Sacramental marriage as an object that can be proposed to intelligent people's act of choice. Concurrent with that investigation, I concur heartily that Tribunals must hone their systems of procedure to efficient use; it was the beginning of that work to which Msgr. Kelleher aspired and succeeded in bringing the more merciful American Procedural Norms. Even more mercy would help!

(REV.) RICHARD F. CARNEY, J.C.D.
Officialis
Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters of not more than 250 or 300 words naturally have a better chance of being published.

ADULT VOCATIONS
special program for men over twenty-one. Write:
ADULT VOCATIONS
Box 41H, Commonweal

Classified

RATES: 60c a word, one time; 57c, three times; 54c, seven times; 51c, thirteen times. Twelve words minimum. For box numbers add 50c per insertion. Classified payable with order; monthly in advance for more than three times. COMMONWEAL, 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016.

Back Issues

A subscriber offers back issues of Commonweal, from 1962 on, to anyone willing to pay shipping charges. Address Box Y Commonweal, 232 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016.

Talks

Divorce and Remarriage for Catholics—Talks by Msgr. Stephen J. Kelleher, Sacred Heart Church, 457 West 51 St., New York, N.Y. 10019. Write or telephone (212—265-5020) for details. Give preferred dates.

Homeless Children

A Salesian missioner in Bogota, Colombia has expanded his ministry to reach 1,100 homeless boys and girls who roamed the city streets. Father Xavier has a rented house for those who are ill and in time has prevailed upon many to attend school or get a job. Another 900 of these children "in the first stages of rehabilitation" require "*facilities which only generous benefactors can* help provide." Gifts for Father Xavier should be sent to: Salesian Missions, Box 30, New Rochelle, N.Y. 10802.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Did You Miss . . .

- *On the Ordination of Women,* by Michael Novak
- *James Baldwin,* by Wilfrid Sheed
- *Catholic Annulments: A Dehumanizing Process,* by Stephen J. Kelleher
- *Günter Grass,* by Marilyn Moorcroft
- *Two Christs in Italy,* by Margo Hammond
- *Inside an Abortion Hospital,* by Margaret O'Brien Steinfels
- *The Nuclear Arms Race,* by Douglas Mattern
- *Violence in the Media,* by Thomas Powers
- *Communion in the Hand,* by Abigail McCarthy
- *Is College Worthwhile,* by Maurice Berube and Robert Gorham Davis

. . . in recent issues of COMMONWEAL?

SEND FOR A HALF-PRICE TRIAL SUBSCRIPTION

11 issues (five months) for $4

FOR NEW SUBSCRIBERS ONLY

COMMONWEAL, 232 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y. 10016

Please send the next eleven issues of COMMONWEAL to:

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip Code_____

☐ I prefer a full year's subscription at $17

7/22/77

412

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED